

Syria sceptical ahead of Christopher trip

DAMASCUS (AFP) — Syria warned Friday it still insisted on a total Israeli withdrawal from the Golan and was sceptical ahead of U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher's second peace shuttle in a month. "Any settlement not based on the central issue of land is useless," an official in Damascus said. The official, asking not to be named, charged that Israel had "minimised the U.S. role by reducing it to a mere postman delivering the Israeli point of view without any amendment." The Israelis, during Mr. Christopher's last shuttle arrangements before a peace treaty, then a phased withdrawal over a long period," he said. But any peace deal with Israel depended on a full withdrawal from the Golan Heights. "Syria will not accept anything less than a total pullout from the Golan and southern Lebanon," the official newspaper Al Thawra said. The task facing Mr. Christopher, who arrived here on Sunday before travelling to Israel, is to "tone down the Israeli position and ensure the implementation of U.N. resolutions" on land-for-peace, it added.

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Israel leaves Gaza and Jericho 27 years after occupation; Palestinian police take over

Combined agency dispatches
JERICHO — Palestinian police brandishing AK-47 rifles triumphantly entered Jericho on Friday on the heels of Israeli soldiers leaving the West Bank for the first time in 27 years of occupation.

A convoy of overcrowded Land-Rovers and buses threaded its way through cheering crowds outside the town's police station taking 750 green-uniformed police to the abandoned Israeli military headquarters.

It was the first full transfer of power to Palestinians under the accord with Israel for limited self-rule in Jericho and the Gaza Strip signed in Washington last September.

The Palestinians also took control of half the Gaza Strip on Friday.

"As of now, you are the commander of the region. I wish you good luck," Israel's central region military commander, General Ilan Biran, told Palestine Liberation Army (PLA) General Hajj Ismail at the King Hussein Bridge.

zone. As the generals' handshake lingered, buses carrying about 400 policemen edged their way through the crowds lining the road from the bridge over the River Jordan.

They were cheered all the way by youths shouting "Allahu Akbar" (God is great). In the central square, hundreds more awaited. Women ululated, holding their children up to touch the soldiers.

Bands struck up and youngsters sang and danced. The Palestinians had already raised the red, green, white and black flag over Jericho before dawn when official buildings and a military base were handed over to 60 police officers who had slipped in overnight and Thursday.

Only half-a-dozen taxi-drivers were awake to witness the event. But word spread fast and whole families flooded on to the streets to hail their heroes.

"The Israeli flag had been brought down by the time we came in," said Ahmad Abu Saadeh, a newly-arrived policeman. "There were no more Israeli soldiers left, we didn't shake hands with any of them."

The Palestinians took over the police station, military administration buildings, the post office, a court house, and a nearby synagogue.

who had slipped past the army stood ripping their shirts. "It is a religious ritual when someone dies. When his father dies or his mother dies, a man tears his clothes," said one of the settlers who wore the skull-cap of a religious Jew.

"A man who sees his land given to his enemies — he also tears his clothes," he said. Policemen guarding the synagogue said Jews would be allowed to pray there.

Elsewhere in the West Bank, Israeli soldiers shot and wounded seven Palestinians during clashes with stone-throwers, hospitals said. A knife-wielding Palestinian lightly injured a Jewish settler at a West Bank junction, Israel Radio said.

The Jericho festivities were cut short when a boy was accidentally shot dead. Ammar Al Shawwa, 9, was killed by a police gun fired by his brother.

The incident prompted police to end the celebrations at what was until Friday the town's main military headquarters.

Police commanders tried to pay a condolence call to the boy's family, but distraught relatives asked them to leave. Palestinians said earlier the takeover of the army headquarters by the newly-arrived police meant liberation.



Palestinian policemen waving the Palestinian flag run through Jericho on Friday after entering the West Bank town to take over security following the withdrawal of the Israeli army (AFP photo)

up and beaten by Israeli soldiers here. We feel safe now," resident Mohammad Said, 42, said tearfully as he kissed a Palestinian policeman.

A giant Palestinian flag was draped along the side of the stone building. "We only believed things were changing when we saw it," said Mohammad Jihad, 27, a clothing merchant, said.

"We are free now," said Minerva Halteh, who runs a Jericho fabric store shop with her husband.

Referring to the Israeli occupation, she said: "It was like this around our neck, making a strangling motion. The police had reached Jericho waving Palestinian flags and AK-47 rifles in the air, making the 'V' for victory sign with their fingers.

Dozens of Palestinians drove alongside the buses, honking and chanting pro-PLO slogans welcoming the "liberation army."

Youths jumped on the buses and jeeps, kissing and hugging policemen. "I am dumbfounded with joy. This is a historic moment, we have been waiting for this for a long time," a lieutenant

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Jericho gives heroes' welcome to policemen

From Mariam M. Shalhin in Jericho

THE nearly 500 Palestinian policemen entering the West Bank town of Jericho received a heroes' welcome by as many as 3,000 residents of this oasis town that is to serve as the first seat of government of an autonomous Palestinian administration.

By the early hours of Friday morning, Palestinian flags and members of the Palestinian National Security Forces (PNSF) were in place on the roof of the infamous Jericho police station in the town's centre. It seemed like a miraculous change since only six hours earlier the Israeli flag and soldiers had manned that very spot.

As the police force entered Jericho in a convoy of Land Rovers, Palestinians danced and hugged and kissed PNSF members. Most of the police force will be stationed at what is now an abandoned army headquarters within the 62 square-kilometre Jericho area.

The Israeli army tried to ban reporters from observing the signing over ceremony for no apparent reason.

py," said one Jericho resident. "They are afraid it will look like a victory."

Many Palestinians initially had trouble recognising the PNSF members Friday morning from the Israeli army men because both wear khaki-coloured fatigues. The Israelis wear wine-red berets, the Palestinians wear grass green berets.

Scarved Jericho women yodeled and hugged the PNSF members and held up their children to kiss the men. Israeli soldiers patrolled most streets of Jericho until about 3 a.m. although technically their duty had already ended. Thursday afternoon, as more than 1,000 people waited in Jericho's central square, Israeli soldiers fired shots in the air to disperse them.

An army curfew was ordered around Jericho and no one was allowed in or out of the district. Journalists were threatened with expulsion if they did not leave of their own free will but most hid in offices or homes of Jericho residents.

PNSF members and Jericho residents were exhausted after days of waiting for the entry of the police force. Their entry

Yemen's armies battle; mediators seek ceasefire

SANAA (Agencies) — Arab League officials seeking a ceasefire in Yemen's civil war held talks with the government in the capital Sanaa on Friday, a league official said.

Speaking in Cairo, the official said the mission, led by Assistant Secretary-General Mohammed Said Al Bereqdar, would also meet Yemen's northern leader, President Ali Abdullah Saleh.

The mission arrived in Sanaa by land from Saudi Arabia because of the uncertain state of Sanaa airport, a target of southern attacks.

As fighting entered its 10th day, north and south continued to issue conflicting accounts of battlefield successes.

The south's Aden Radio denied that northern forces had captured the area around the town of Dhalea, in a mountainous region 100 kilometres north along a main road from the southern stronghold of Aden.

The radio said the north was still mounting artillery, rocket and air attacks on villages in the region and the south was "waging energetic defensive battles."

A northern military spokesman said earlier that northern forces had captured the province and city of Dhalea. Fighting was raging at Anad, 60 kilometres north of Aden, and in Abyan province, east of the southern port, the spokesman said in a broadcast on Sanaa Television.

Aden proposes plan for immediate ceasefire

ADEN (AFP) — Southern leaders put forward a seven-point plan Friday to end nine days of civil war in Yemen between rival north and south forces, an official source said here.

The plan proposed by the southern Yemen Socialist Party, which is headed by ousted Vice-President Ali Salem Al Beidh, calls for an "immediate end to the war" and the creation of a government of national unity.

The government would be charged with "wiping out the consequences of the war" and conducting an inquiry into "those responsible for the war," the source said.

Mr. Beidh, who was sacked last week as vice-president by the northern-dominated parliament in the capital Sanaa, has said a ceasefire would depend on the withdrawal of northern forces from the south.

His northern rival, President Ali Abdullah Saleh, has said he would only accept a ceasefire if the southerners agreed to accept his government, respect the country's unity and put all armed forces under the government's control.

Northern leaders rejected the latest southern ceasefire plan. A spokesman said by telephone from Sanaa that there was "nothing new" in the plan.

southern leaders, for the Scud attack, warning them to leave their stronghold of Aden or be killed.

The war broke out on May 4 after eight months of feuding between Mr. Saleh, a conservative, and Mr. Beidh, a socialist, over the balance of power between north and south in a unified Yemeni state formed in 1990.



PROUD GRANDPARENTS: Their Royal Highnesses Crown Prince Hassan and Princess Sarawath with their daughter, Her Royal Highness Princess Sumayyah, and her new-born twins. Tareq and Zein Al Sharaf, and Princess Sumayyah's husband Nasser Jaleh in London. The twins were born on Monday

PLO 'preoccupations' delay formalisation of agreements

By P.V. Vivekanand Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The release of details of agreements reached between Jordan and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) on implementing their Jan. 7 economic accord has been delayed for 48 hours upon the request of the PLO leadership, both sides said Friday.

It was not immediately known whether the PLO leadership in Tunis would seek any amendment to the agreements, which were supposed to have been formalised and released Thursday through a joint statement and a press conference.

The delay in the process was attributed to the PLO Executive Committee's preoccupations with naming members of an "autonomy cabinet" for the Gaza Strip and Jericho.

Information made available to the Jordan Times indicated that the main points covered by the agreements included: — The formation of a joint committee for banking and monetary affairs in the autonomous territories; envisaged under the Sept. 13 Israel-PLO declaration of principles;

— Maintaining the Jordanian dinar as the "main currency" in circulation in the occupied territories.

"These are the salient points in the agreement which are of utmost importance at this point in time," said a Palestinian source. "Other points cover the technical details of how to implement these decisions and also touch upon tourism," said the source, who preferred anonymity.

Jordanian sources confirmed that these were the broad outline of the agreements, reached in two days of talks between a high-level Jordanian delegation headed by Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Jawad Al Anani and a PLO team led by Ahmad Qourie, director of the Economic Department of the PLO.

"It is an implementation-oriented document, and we hope to launch moves on the ground as soon as it is ratified by the leaderships of the two countries," said a senior Jordanian source, adding that the government had reviewed and endorsed it.

could arrive at, given the peculiar circumstances of Palestinian autonomy.

"Are the Palestinians free to decide and act as they want?" asked another official, in a reference to an economic agreement signed by the PLO and Israel in Paris in April.

That accord details a series of measures that are widely seen as confining the PLO's freedom in exercising its economic options with Jordan, or any other party other than the occupying power itself. Furthermore, it also closed the door against the implementation of some of the provisions in the Jan. 7 agreement signed between Jordan and PLO in Amman.

Asked whether the agreements reached last week reflected the Kingdom's acceptance that they were the best that the Kingdom and the PLO could hope for, given the Israeli-imposed limitations, the source was non-committal, saying: "That's your deduction."

Arafat's autonomy cabinet holds a few surprise names

By Lamis K. Andoni

AFTER A WEEK of difficult negotiations, Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat has successfully talked prominent personalities from the Israeli occupied territories and the diaspora into joining a Palestinian authority to run autonomy in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

By Friday night, at least 17 personalities accepted to take part in the 25-member authority. Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) officials expected a complete list to be ready in the next 24 hours.

In addition to 15 names announced by the PLO, Palestinian officials said that prominent Palestinian businessman Mubir Al Masri has joined the authority, while Dr. Assad Abdul Rahman, the Amman-based head of Shouman Foundation, is considering the offer.

Initial reluctance by key Palestinian figures was replaced by approval, apparently in response to Israeli threats to suspend the entry of the Palestinian police force into the Gaza Strip and Jericho and influenced by the wave of popular celebrations that swept the territories over the transfer of Israeli responsibilities to the PLO.

At least two PLO executive committee members, Jamal Sourani and Jawad Al Ghosein, were expected to join the authority, and even Dr. Mohammad Zuhdi Al Nashashibi, who has condemned the economic part of the agreement, might change his mind.

The officials said that Arab — mostly Egyptian — and international personalities involved in the peace process have been trying to convince the architect of the Israeli-Palestinian agreement, Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen) to join the authority.

The Palestinian authority is expected to include 15 personalities from the occupied territories and 10 from the diaspora — including two women from each category. Three key figures who had

initially refused to take part in the authority either in protest against the terms of the Israeli-Palestinian agreement reached in Cairo on May 4 or against Mr. Arafat's single-handed leadership style appeared on top of a list officially delivered by the PLO to the Israeli government on Thursday night.

Palestinian leader Faisal Husseini, head of the Palestinian team to the bilateral negotiations with Israel, Dr. Saeb Ereikat, and former Palestinian spokeswoman Hanan Ashrawi, accepted to join the Palestinian authority after having snubbed the offer.

Both Mr. Husseini and Dr. Ereikat have expressed serious reservations about the autonomy deal and had urged Mr. Arafat not to sign it. But the biggest surprise was Dr. Ashrawi, who has repeatedly declared that she wanted to remain independent to head a Palestinian human rights commission.

In a lecture at the Shoman Foundation two weeks ago, Dr. Ashrawi lambasted the PLO leadership for its handling of the negotiations with Israel.

By accepting the post, Dr. Ashrawi became one of two prominent Palestinian women on the Palestinian authority. Fateh central committee member Intisar Al Wazir, widow of PLO military leader Khalil Al Wazir, widow of PLO military leader Khalil Al Wazir who was assassinated by Israeli squads in 1988, was among the first to accept the appointment to practically the first Palestinian administration of part of the occupied Palestinian territories.

There were no statements made by the leaders especially Mr. Husseini, Dr. Ereikat and Dr. Ashrawi, explaining their position. But it seemed that they had decided to work from within the authority in spite of their dissatisfaction with the agreement itself and Mr. Arafat's modus operandi.

(Continued on page 10)

U.S.: On-ground change priority in water talks

WASHINGTON (USIA) — Multilateral talks in the Middle East peace process were designed to deal with the practical issues and problems that all the countries of the region face, says John Herbst, director of the State Department's Office of Near Eastern Regional Affairs.

In a May 11 USIA Worldnet discussion with regional experts, journalists and members of the Multilateral Working Group on Water "Conserving Water Resources," Herbst stressed that "one of the purposes of the multilateral is to foster a dialogue among regional parties."

Listening as the many ideas, suggestions and issues were discussed and developed during the hour-long conversation, Mr. Herbst noted, "What we are seeing right here is such a dialogue — not just in the working group meetings, but also through satellite technology."

Mr. Herbst said that cooperation among delegates of the nations attending the recent water multilateral conference in Muscat made it possible to approve several concrete projects that can change water-use practices in the Middle East.

The satellite exchange also demonstrated not only the progress and the challenges confronting the Middle East peace process, but that participants are eager to resolve issues "on the ground."

Mr. Herbst said conference in Muscat approved a proposal for a desalination research center in Oman, an Israeli proposal for rehabilitating small municipalities' water systems, an American proposal for waste water treatment and re-use facilities.

Among the other projects, including ones projected for Gaza and the West Bank, were a Norwegian proposal to study the comparative regional water institutions, and a German proposal to study water supply and demand among core parties in the Middle East.

All projects are directed toward priorities of enhancing the region's water supply, improving water management practices and conservation, Mr. Herbst said.

"If we proceed with all these things, perhaps in the space of nine months or a year we will begin to see actual projects under way," he noted, referring to such projects as starting on building waste-water treatment facilities, rehabilitating small communities' water systems, and developing studies relating to regional water institutions and water supply and demand.

Looking toward prospects for cooperation in the future, Mr. Herbst said that "as Arab-Israeli peace is achieved on the bilateral tracks... other countries in the Middle East, as well as those participating in the bilateral negotiations, should begin to address those issues which affect all of them," and regional long-range economic development.

Sharif Al Moosa, a Fulbright scholar from Al Beireh in the West Bank, however, said a seminal question in such studies relates to information and data.

"It seems to me these data and the information that will be provided to these banks will come from governments, and (that)... a necessary complement for these data banks is what we might call freedom of information," he said, noting that all water specialists "should have easy access to state records, to state data, to verify the quality and the reliability of these data."

"Are you planning anything about the freedom of information in the multilateral?" he asked Mr. Herbst.

"At this point, I don't believe that there is significant exchange of water data between countries in the region," Mr. Herbst responded. He said the United States "has endorsed the idea of creating regional data banks; we will begin a serious process of exchange."

"We have also endorsed the idea of helping the Palestinians establish their own national data bank," he added.

"For there to be a meaningful exchange you need to have standardisation of data, and we've already held a workshop designed to help the countries standardise data collection," Mr. Herbst explained.

"This is a building block for future cooperation on a whole host of water issues. Therefore, it's an important step, but it's a step which takes a little bit of time, and we are pursuing it carefully," he said.

While the date for the next multilateral conference on water has not been set, Mr. Herbst said that in the interim, a variety of "interregional" water working group meetings designed to advance specific projects will continue.



FOLDING THE OCCUPATION: Israeli soldiers watch their officer folding the last Israeli flag that was waving on a post in Jericho, the last one to leave the West Bank town on Friday (AFP photo)

U.N. committee reports human rights worsened in occupied lands despite accord

By Karonza Jadoun
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The human rights situation in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip has deteriorated after the Sept. 13 signing of the declaration of principles between the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) and Israel, a U.N. special committee has found.

A May 7 press release on the field mission conducted by a U.N. special committee to the region said that the committee was still being denied access by Israel to the occupied territories.

The panel, formally known as the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and other Arabs of the occupied territories, based its investigation on testimonies of 37 witnesses with recent and first-hand knowledge of human rights situation in the occupied territories. It focused in particular on the situation following the signing of the declaration of principles.

The special committee, founded in 1968 under a General Assembly resolution and composed of the representatives of Malaysia, Senegal and Sri Lanka, conducted a 12-day field mission to Cairo, Amman and Damascus during which its members met with senior officials and reviewed the human rights situation in the occupied territories.

The special committee, which also draws data from reports on the Israeli and Arab language press published in the occupied territories, communications from non-governmental organisations (NGOs) concerned with the promotion of human rights, said that persons they talked to attributed the deteriorating situation in the West Bank and Gaza Strip to the "disregard by the Israeli defence forces for the life and safety of the residents of the occupied territories."

It quoted the witnesses as saying the Israeli military systematically arm and protect settlers.

Another main reason emphasised by witnesses was "the continued existence of Israeli settlements and the increasingly aggressive and violent behaviour of the settlers who, in most cases, acted illegally and with impunity."

The settlements have been and are still being expanded, and settlers, according to witnesses, commit provocative acts that violate the sanctity of the Islamic religious life, mentioning the Hebron mosque massacre as the most flagrant example, the committee said.

Another violation of human rights in the occupied territories, it said, is the closure of the territories that deprived more than 120,000 Palestinians who used to work in Israel of their means of livelihood.

The panel said that although more than 1,000 prisoners are reported to have been released since the Sept. 13 signing, "administrative detentions" and arrests had increased.

The committee was also informed that ill-treatment and torture of detainees, especially under interrogation, had continued.

The press release concluded that there would be no support for the peace process if the human rights situation in the occupied territories remains as it is.

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Arab-American Muslim groups call for ceasefire in Yemen

WASHINGTON (USIA) — A coalition of leading Arab American and Muslim groups is calling for an immediate cessation of hostilities in Yemen and a political solution to the conflict there through a national dialogue.

Fearing that the fighting between rival northern and southern Yemeni forces will escalate into a full-scale civil war, the coalition is also calling upon the United States to take a more active role in seeking a solution to the conflict.

Stressing that the groups are not taking any political sides in the conflict, Khalil Jahshan of the National Association of Arab Americans (NAAA) said, "Our main objective right now is to stop the fighting."

To that end, the organisations are calling upon all the parties to "effect an immediate cessation to all hostilities in Yemen and to seek a negotiated political solution through a national dialogue aimed at reconciliation and the safeguarding of Yemeni unity and democracy," Mr. Jahshan said.

Mr. Jahshan, along with representatives of the Arab American Institute, American Muslim Council, American-Yemeni Friendship Association, and Union of Supportive Shurists met May 11 with staff at the National Security Council to discuss the situation in Yemen.

The State Department issued a statement May 4 calling for an end to the fighting in Yemen and for a political solution to the conflict.

The United States has urged all Yemenis "to hold fast to their chosen goals of unity, democratisation, and economic reform," the statement said.

Assistant Secretary of State Robert Pelletreau arrived in Yemen May 4 and met with Yemeni leaders during the crisis. Jahshan called Assistant Secretary of State Pelletreau's efforts "a good step," but that the United States should do more, including mediation between the parties to the conflict.

His coalition, he said, is urging the United States to take a more proactive role "to end the conflict in Yemen. Jahshan called for another Pelletreau mission to Yemen and urged the United States to "pressure the parties to effect a ceasefire."

Members of the coalition warned that the conflict in Yemen could spill over into other Gulf states and therefore it poses a threat to U.S. interests in the region.

"The danger of this conflict spill-over beyond the boundaries of Yemen is (where) the American national interest is and that is why we should move promptly," Mr. Jahshan said.

Mr. Amoudi called on the United States to support Arab League efforts to stop the conflict in Yemen. He also urged the United States to call for an arms embargo against Yemen.

There are reports that both sides are scrambling for arms and ammunitions from the outside. We think this should be stopped. Our president, our secretary of state should come out and warn all other parties that nobody should be involved," Alamoudi said.

Abdul Wahab Al Kebisi of the Union of Supportive Shurists called on the United States to address the humanitarian needs in Yemen caused by the conflict.

"Human loss is the number one issue," Mr. Alkebi said. While there are conflicting accounts on the number of casualties, "we know they are significant," he said.

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NEWS IN BRIEF

McDonnell announces deal with Israel

ST. LOUIS (AP) — The United States and Israel signed the authorisation Thursday for the production of 21 F-15 Eagle fighter jets for the Israeli air force, McDonnell Douglas announced. The deal is worth about \$2 billion and is expected to help extend the life of the F-15 programme through 1999. McDonnell Douglas won the important contract earlier this year after a competitive dogfight with Lockheed, which was offering its F-16C, a less expensive and less versatile jet. Israel will have the option of ordering up to four more of the planes. The planes will be delivered starting in 1997. McDonnell also has a deal to sell 72 F-15Es to Saudi Arabia.

Iraq slams U.S. envoy for 'dirty' remarks

BAGHDAD (R) — Iraq's ruling Baath party newspaper blasted a senior U.S. envoy on Thursday for remarks that both Iraq and Iran remained a threat to the stability and security of the oil-rich Gulf states. U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs Robert Pelletreau contended on Wednesday that both Baghdad and Tehran had not abandoned their expansionist ambitions in the region and efforts to rearm themselves. "Through such claims, Pelletreau's aim is only to notify Gulf states... that they are in constant need of American protection via joint defence treaties and continuous purchase of extra weapons in (U.S.) arsenal," said Al Thawra in a front-page editorial. It described Mr. Pelletreau's remarks as "dirty." It said the U.S. administration's aim behind such statements was to "create a fabricated furor" whenever the date approached for a periodic review of sanctions on Iraq.

Pentagon launches study of Gulf illness

WASHINGTON (R) — Spurred by criticism from Gulf war veterans, the Pentagon has announced a fresh effort to analyse and treat mystery illnesses suffered by hundreds of U.S. troops who served in the 1991 conflict. The severe flu-like symptoms have in many cases drawn no clear diagnoses and some members of Congress have charged that they were caused by traces of chemical war agents rather than parasites or viruses. The new joint effort by the departments of defence, veterans affairs and health and human services will be based on a determination last month that the syndrome is not a single disease but a range of ills with overlapping symptoms and causes.

Bomb kills pro-Israeli gunman

MARIJAYOUN (R) — A roadside bomb ripped through an Israeli-backed militia patrol in South Lebanon on Friday, killing one militiaman and wounding two, security sources said. No group immediately claimed responsibility for the attack against the South Lebanon Army (SLA) militia patrol near the village of Kfar Hounah in territory under Israeli occupation. Israeli and SLA gunners retaliated, shelling the outskirts of a string of villages.

Egypt, Libya sign barter deal

CAIRO (R) — An Egypt trading company and Libya's state-owned steel mill have signed a barter deal worth \$100 million, government newspapers said on Friday. The Libyan Iron and Steel Complex at Misrata, one of the largest in the Arab World, will send the Egyptian company iron products, especially iron rods for construction, the newspaper Al Akhbar reported. In exchange, Egypt's Arab Company for Development and International Trade will export ferromanganese and ferroalloy products, aluminium ingots, refractories, vehicles, household appliances and spare parts, it said. The deal, similar to a previous one for exports of Libyan steel to Egypt, was signed on Thursday by representatives of the two companies.

Iranian farmer boasts of superchicken

TEHRAN (AFP) — A chicken in western Iran has been laying eggs at record speed, on average one egg almost every hour, its proud owner said Friday. Jalil Khorshidi from Kermanshah told IRNA news agency that the chicken, of Chinese stock, produced 42 eggs in a 52-hour period, backed by a diet of rice, wheat and vegetables. But it also eats twice as much as other hens.

Israeli MPs meet Palestinians

VIENNA (AFP) — Members of the Israeli parliament opened two days of informal talks with Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) officials in the Austrian capital on Friday. The agenda covers autonomy in Palestinian regions, the future status of Jerusalem, refugees, Jewish settlements in occupied territories, and borders, a spokesman for the organisers said. The discussions are being held at the Bruno Kreisky Forum, a political and scientific institution named after the Austrian chancellor who promoted recognition of the PLO. The Israeli team includes Eli Dayan, head of the parliamentary group of the ruling Labour Party, accompanied by Yossi Katz and Avigdor Kahalani. The PLO side includes Ahmad Tibi, an adviser to PLO chief Yasser Arafat, Hassan Abdul Rahman, PLO representative in Washington, and Ibrahim Karain, from the PLO information office in Jerusalem.

2 Saudis, Pakistani beheaded in Saudi

RIYADH (AFP) — Two Saudis convicted of rape and a Pakistani drug-smuggler were beheaded by sword Friday in Saudi Arabia, the Interior Ministry said in a statement broadcast on television. Saudi Saleh Selimi and Kasseb Zahran were sentenced to death for raping a woman at knife point after breaking into her house. They were beheaded in Jeddah, on the western coast. Pakistani Hakim Khan Said Ismail Khan, who had attempted to smuggle heroin into the kingdom, was executed in the capital Riyadh. Twelve people have now been beheaded in S. Arabia this year, according to figures compiled from Interior Ministry statements. Saudi Arabia decided in 1987 to sentence to death drug traffickers, pushers and persistent users in a bid to stop drug abuse.

JORDAN TELEVISION

PROGRAMMES TWO
17:30 Le Monde Sous Marin
18:30 Dossier De La Semaine
19:00 News in French
19:15 Ushusun
19:30 News in Hebrew
20:00 News in Arabic
20:30 The Fresh Prince Of Bel-Air
21:00 One To One
21:30 The Campbells
22:00 News in English
22:20 Feature Film: The Last Session

PRAYER TIMES

04:07 Fajr
04:37 (Sunrise) Dhuhr
12:53 Dhuhr
16:12 'Asr
19:28 Maghrib
20:55 Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church Swifesh, Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church, Tel. 62785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 62490
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757
Terrence Church Tel. 622366
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541

Anglican Church Tel. 630851, Tel. 628543

Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 773261
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751
Armenian International Church Tel. 625266
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 624328
German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 64195
The Latter-Day Saints Tel. 654932
Church of Nazareth Tel. 675691
The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.
Temperatures will rise slightly with wind, northeasterly moderate. In Agaba, winds will be northerly moderate and seas calm.

Min/Max temp.
Agaba 10 / 25
Agaba 16 / 32
Deserts 8 / 27
Jordan Valley 14 / 31
Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 21, Agaba 30 Humidity readings: Amman 37 per cent, Agaba 24 per cent.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDER

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:
Dr. Yehya Abdul Salam 736072
Dr. Fakhri Tayeh 838880
Dr. Salman Al Daboubi 776751
Dr. Abdul Wahab Awad 846070
First pharmacy 661912
Petroleum pharmacy 778336
Al Asma pharmacy 637055
Najm pharmacy 636762
Yacoub pharmacy 644945
Shamsi pharmacy 657660
Najm pharmacy 947632

IRBID:
Dr. Akram Momani 248974
Alquds pharmacy (—)
ZARQA:
Dr. Rajah Saqr 901290
Khalaf pharmacy 985417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 637111

Civil Defence Department 661111

Civil Defence Emergency 630341
Rescue Police 199
Fire Brigade 891228
Blood Bank 775121
Highway Police 843402
Traffic Police 893390
Public Security Department 630321
Hotel Complaints 605800
Price Complaints 661176
Water and Sewerage 897467
Complaints 897467
Complaints 897467
Complaints 897467
Telephone Information (directory assistance) 121
Overseas Calls 010230
Central Amman Telephone 623101
Repairs 623101
Abdali Telephone Repairs 661101
Jordan Television 773111
Radio Jordan 774111
Water Authority 680100
Jordan Electricity Authority 815615
Electric Power Company 636381
RJ Flight Information 08-53200
Queen Alia Int. Airport 08-53200

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
Hussein Medical Centre 813813/32
Khalid Maternity, J. Amn 642416
Khalid Maternity, J. Amn 642416
Jabal Amman Maternity 642362
Malas, J. Amman 636140
Palestine, Shamsi 641714
Shamsi Hospital 669131
University Hospital 845845
Al-Musharraf Hospital 667279
The Islamic, Abdali 66612757
Al-Ahli, Abdali 661646
Islamic, Al-Musharraf 7710103
Al-Bashir, J. Ashraf 77511126
Army, Marja 89161115
Queen Alia Hospital 60240950
Anad Hospital 674155
ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital (09)83323
Zarqa National Hospital (09)900560
The Sina Hospital (09)86732
Al Hikma Modern Hospital (09)99099
IRBID:
Princess Basma Hospital (02)22555
Greek Catholic Hospital (02)27275
Ibn Al Nafes Hospital (02)27100
AQABA:
Princess Faya Hospital (03)31411

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (06)53200-5, where it should always be verified.

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)
06:30 Jeddah, Singapore (RJ)
07:15 Jeddah (add) (RJ)
09:45 New Delhi (RJ)
10:25 Agaba (RJ)
10:30 Dhahran (RJ)
10:40 Bahrain, Doha (RJ)
11:00 Abu Dhabi, Dubai (RJ)
11:30 Beirut (RJ)
11:40 Colombo (RJ)
16:00 New York, Amsterdam (RJ)
17:55 Jeddah (add) (RJ)
18:30 Paris (add) (RJ)
19:20 Frankfurt, Vienna (RJ)
19:30 London, Berlin (RJ)
19:45 Frankfurt (add) (RJ)
04:35 Agaba, London (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

04:20 Vienna (OA)
15:45 Rome (A2)
20:30 Paris, Damascus (AF)
20:45 Dubai (E4)
22:25 Amsterdam (KL)
04:35 Cairo (MS)

DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)
06:30 Brussels, Paris (add) (RJ)
07:00 Beirut (RJ)
08:00 Agaba (RJ)
12:30 Amsterdam, New York (RJ)
12:35 Paris, Brussels (RJ)
12:45 Geneva, Madrid (RJ)
13:45 Cairo (RJ)
13:55 London (RJ)
21:00 Jeddah (add) (RJ)
21:05 Bahrain, Doha (RJ)
22:30 Abu Dhabi, Dubai (RJ)
05:30 London (RJ)
Other Flights (Terminal 2)
09:15 Beirut (ME)
13:50 Vienna (OA)
20:45 Dubai (EM)
23:55 Damascus, Paris (AF)

HIAZ RAILWAY TRAIN

Dep. Amman 8:00 a.m. every Monday
Arr. Damascus 5:00 p.m. every Monday
Dep. Damascus 7:30 a.m. every Sunday
Arr. Amman 5:00 p.m. every Sunday

MARKET PRICES

Upper/lower price in Jds per kg.

Apple 550 / 630
Banana (Mukhammar) 620
Cabbage 200 / 120
Carrot 350/250
Cauliflower 140 / 80
Cucumbers (large) 280 / 200
Cucumbers (small) 260 / 160
Eggplant 260 / 160
Garlic 400 / 300
Green beans 420 / 300
Lemon 200 / 120
Marrow (large) 250 / 200
Marrow (small) 480 / 300
Mushrooms 240 / 160
Orange 400 / 200
Peanut (dry) 150 / 100
Peas 480 / 320
Pepper (hot) 360 / 250
Pepper (sweet) 480 / 320
Potato 280 / 160
String beans 620 / 420
Watermelon 260 / 200
Vine Leaves 700 / 450

Civil court orders Chalabis to pay JD6m for embezzlement, damages

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The file of Jordan's largest bank embezzlement case was reopened last week when a court ruled that Ahmad Chalabi and some of his relatives on the board of the dissolved Petra Bank should pay over JD6 million representing an amount they embezzled and related damages, interest and legal charges.

The ruling by Judge Mohammad Hawamdeh of the Court of First Instance was the first civil court verdict in the infamous case involving several hundred millions of dinars after the State Security Court tried and convicted Dr. Chalabi and his relatives/associates of gross embezzlement, speculation with the national currency and violations of the Kingdom's banking regulations.

The State Security Court sentenced Dr. Chalabi and 15 others — most of them Chalabi family members and relatives and close associates of the Iraqi-born banker, all of them in absentia — to jail terms and imposed heavy fines on them. Thirty-two people, most of

them officials of the bank, were acquitted.

Dr. Chalabi was sentenced to 35 years in prison with hard labour and asked to pay \$46 million, the amount the court found that the banker had embezzled. Dr. Chalabi, who fled Jordan a few days after the government's Economic Security Committee (ESC) took over the troubled bank on Aug. 2, 1989.

An ESC-appointed committee ran the institution for some time and the Central Bank of Jordan (CBJ) pumped state funds into the bank to protect depositors.

The CBJ extended a total of JD254 million as advance to Petra Bank, which was placed under liquidation in July 1990. The liquidation process was expected to have been completed by July 1992, but the deadline has been extended to July 21, 1994.

In his April 9, 1992 ruling, State Security Court Judge Brigadier-General Ahmad Mango said the total amount embezzled was JD157.29 million in addition to JD29 million in shareholders' rights and JD47 million in expected losses — a total loss of JD233 million.

The actual loss of the government in the affair could be determined only after the liquidation process is completed. However, it is estimated the figure will not be less than JD 100 million.

Dr. Chalabi and his associates are also seen as having partly contributed, through their unorthodox banking practices and violations of banking rules coupled with speculation in the dinar, to the plunge in the value of the currency in 1988-89.

Most of the convicts are believed to be living in London, but Jordan's efforts to extradite them through the International Police Organisation (Interpol) have not made much headway.

Dr. Chalabi, a self-styled Iraqi opposition leader, became a member of the Iraqi National Congress after his flight from Jordan. Now he is believed to be running the propaganda wing of the organisation based in London.

The civil court case, in which Ahmad Chalabi, Jawad Chalabi, Rushdie Chalabi and Hazem Chalabi were charged with embezzlement, stemmed from a Jan. 12, 1981 transfer of

\$2 million from the Petra Bank to a local tour and travel company also owned by Dr. Chalabi.

The transfer, effected through a secret coding, was supposed to have come from Socofi, a Geneva-based financing company also owned by the Chalabi family. But no such transfer was actually made, while the Petra Bank transferred the amount to the local travel and tour company as a premeditated plan for embezzling the bank's funds, the court found (Socofi has also been liquidated since).

The court found all the accused guilty as charged and should pay the bank — meaning its liquidators — \$2 million and another JD4.583 million in damages, interests and legal charges.

It was not immediately clear how the authorities intended to enforce the court ruling in view of the failure in efforts to have the state security court verdict enforced. The accused were represented in court, but it was not known whether the presence in court of legal counsel also meant that the accused undertook to abide by the verdict.

Gammoh says government will not lobby Senate on draft sales tax law

By P.V. Vivekanand

Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The government is not planning to lobby the Upper House of Parliament to have its own way in structuring and implementing the draft law on sales tax by trying to reverse amendments introduced by the Lower House, Finance Minister Sami Gammoh said Friday.

The affirmation came in contradiction to widely-held views among economists and analysts that the executive authority would seek to influence the appointed Senate to scale up the general rate of tax to the original 10 per cent from the seven per cent as amended by the Lower House.

It was also expected to seek separate from the law a list of items exempt from the levy and to retain it as a Cabinet option to set the rate and goods, and to bring back a three-year period before the implementation of a full value-added tax system instead of a five-year period determined by the lawmakers.

The House approved the law after the amendments and forwarded it to the Senate last week after a heated debate on the floor, where Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali and Mr. Gammoh tried but failed to convince the lawmakers to endorse the

draft law in its original form as submitted in February.

The introduction of the law is a precondition of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) before it gives a certification to clear the way for Jordan's debt rescheduling negotiations with Western creditors.

"We have spent more than 30 months discussing and negotiating the draft law and we are not going to waste any more time on this," Mr. Gammoh told the Jordan Times on Friday.

"We cannot attach a time tab to the enactment of the law," he said. "But we are ready to implement it as soon as it clears Parliament and a Royal Decree is issued enacting it."

Notwithstanding government desires to have the law in its original shape as proposed, "there will not be any lobbying," Mr. Gammoh said. "The Upper House has made a thorough study of the law and it is up to the senators to decide what course of action to take while debating it."

If the Senate decides to reverse the House amendments to the law and returns it and if the House rejects that then a joint session of the two Houses will be called to determine the issue — a process that might further delay the enactment of the law leading to missed deadlines in



Sami Gammoh

debt rescheduling negotiations with the Paris Club of creditor governments.

"We are working on it," Mr. Gammoh said when asked what the government intended to do in addressing an already missed deadline with the Paris Club.

In the meantime, the government is preparing the ground for the implementation of the sales tax law.

"It needs expertise and experience to ensure the smooth introduction of sales tax," said the finance minister. "We will implement it, and when we find gaps and loopholes in the law then we will seek to update it as warranted."

Prime Minister Majali said last month that the government would be able to meet deputies' demand for a pay-rise for civil servants and for increased infrastructure in their constituencies because the government was hard put to make such allocations in view of the amendments they introduced to the law.

The government has said that the introduction of sales tax is part of a wider reform programme in the entire taxation structure in force, and that the enactment of the law would be coupled with changes in laws related to income tax, customs and other duties to maintain price stability in the market.

Mr. Gammoh corrected the widely-held notion that the law meant a loss of up to JD40 million to JD45 million from the JD170 million in tax revenues as projected in the 1994 fiscal budget.

"There is no definite figure," said the minister, noting that the consumption tax — which is expected to be replaced by the sales tax law — is already in force and the fiscal year is near its half-way mark. It meant that the revenues are being collected regardless of the description of the levy.

Mr. Gammoh estimated at 10 per cent any upward or downward swing in tax revenues from the figures projected in the budget.

HOME NEWS IN BRIEF

King receives Israeli Arabs, Samaritans

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein Thursday received delegations representing Israeli Arabs and the Samaritans sect living near Nablus in the occupied West Bank who came to offer condolences on the passing of Queen Zein Al Sharaf, the Queen Mother.

Princess Basma receives Swiss women

AMMAN (J.T.) — Her Royal Highness Princess Basma Thursday received a group of 17 prominent and active Swiss women representing the Swiss association "Arc-en-Ciel Famille d'Espirit" (Rainbow Family Spirit) and led by Jan Barakat, wife of the Jordanian ambassador to Switzerland, at the headquarters of Queen Alia Fund for Social Development (QAF). The delegation started their visit by touring an exhibit of rugs and ceramics produced by women who benefit from QAF's income-generating schemes for rural women. Following the tour, they were briefed about the social and economic development activities implemented by QAF through its over 40 community development centres. The delegation expressed interest in the Jordanian National Committee for Women (JNCW) and other women's issues and were given more information about the activities and goals of the JNCW. "Arc-en-Ciel Famille d'Espirit" was founded in 1993 as a reaction against global violence. Members represent different nationalities who aim to spread awareness and understanding among people of different races and cultures to create global harmony. The visit to Jordan is the first for this group outside Switzerland.

Labour unions group elects new committees

By Natasha Bukhari

Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The executive and the central committees of the General Federation of Labour Unions (GFLU) held elections on Thursday evening after having been postponed several times because of disagreements within the administrative committees of the different unions involved.

Khalid Shreim kept his post as the federation's general secretary, and Mazen Ma'aitah was elected as his deputy.

Also during the meeting, 17 unionists representing the different labour unions were elected to form the GFLU's executive committee.

At the end of the elections, Minister of Labour Khaled Ghazawi delivered a speech in which he congratulated the winners and urged them to put their personal conflicts

aside in order to be able to work for the general interest of labourers.

He added that the ministry will publish the federation's regulations in the newspapers to eliminate all ambiguity regarding these regulations which define the GFLU's activities and authorities.

Outside the federation building, some unionists Thursday complained of not being allowed entry into the election site.

The group of labourers accused the GFLU leadership of practising bureaucratic leadership measures and charged that the elections were undemocratic, citing as evidence the police's prohibition of their entry into the building.

The labour minister urged the newly-elected officials to concentrate on serving their country to the best of their abilities.

A palette of vocal works comes to town for 2 nights

By Jean-Claude Elias

Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — A 40-member male vocal ensemble, Die Meistersinger Chorus, is a blend of distinguished, highly professional singers. Dynamism, energy and an extremely diversified repertoire are the trademarks of the choir.

The chorus will perform in Amman, with Julie Boyd as soprano soloist, at the Royal Cultural Centre, main theatre, on Saturday and Sunday, May 14 and 15.

Under a very Wagnerian name Die Meistersinger, conducted by their founder, Marvin L. Robertson, display an amazing palette of vocal works ranging from nearly

swinging rhythms to strictly classical, always performed with taste, finesse and balance.

"Meistersinger" is the name of the members of the German workingmen's guilds, of the 15th and 16th centuries, which had dedicated themselves to the promotion of poetry and music.

Die Meistersinger Male Chorus is from Southern College, Collegedale, Tennessee, in the U.S.

Dr. Robertson founded the group in 1973. Its members come from fifteen states of the U.S., as well as from Puerto Rico and Canada.

The choir is well-known in the United States and has



Die Meistersinger Male Chorus

participated in countless performances.

Ms. Boyd holds a masters degree in vocal performance and literature from Eastman School of Music.

Die Meistersinger Male Chorus, Julie Boyd and Marvin L. Robertson are invited to Jordan by the American Cultural Center in cooperation with Speaking Professionally and Rawdat Al Maarif College and Schools.

Artists bring cottage industry of Save the Children to new plateaus

By Rebecca Salti

Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The Bani Hamida Women's Weaving Project has reached a new dimension for its ninth annual spring rug exhibition with the added creations of 20 local artists and artisans. Especially designed by well-known members of the Jordanian art community, a unique array of rugs, wall hangings and cushions repeat the colours and complement the themes of a wide variety of original art work by painters, potters, sculptors and ironworkers. Executed in wool by hundreds of bedouin weavers, the weavings are on display for sale with all the other contemporary creations at the Jordan Construction Contractors' Association in Abdoun.

In a separate but equally eye-catching exhibition in a villa opposite the association are the handmade quilts, bedroom accessories, wall hangings, handbags and other elegant crafts of the Jordan River Designs Project, embroidered in refreshing spring colours by Palestinian women in Mahatta and Natheef.

The two exhibitions show the work of many bedouin and refugee women involved in two projects established by Save the Children to provide part-time work for underprivileged women to earn supplemental income at home to help them raise their children. Both

shows are open to the public from 10:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. every day through Sunday, May 15.

"We try to make each semi-annual exhibition more beautiful and interesting than the last," says Ghada Nassar, manager of the weaving project. Suddenly, highly cultured leaders of aesthetics in Jordan have been invited to reach out to rural women whose lifestyle is still very much a part of Jordan's heritage — to partner in making a rug."

"I wondered what this Bani Hamida woman thought when she made the cushion I designed," he said. In the shape of a Three Star match box, the cushion is complete with matches that can be removed

and played with. "She doesn't know Andy Warhol and his famous painting of a can of Campbell's Soup, or that I wanted to do the same thing. She and all her neighbours have a Jordanian matchbox in their house."

"Most of the artists would not otherwise have mixed with their rural culture if it hadn't been for this exhibition which has pulled these diverse Jordanian elements together. The match box wasn't important. It was the process of interaction. The very elite artist living in an ivory tower had to learn the ability of a bedouin woman and the limitations of her craft."

"Here we are spanning a tremendous gap," marvelled Mr. Khammash, "between

urban artists and bedouin women in a mountainous area, who are far removed, not just geographically, but in other respects. It's amazing that a rug has become the bridge."

Then one day she flagged down the project car as it passed her home in the village of Makawir. "Come and see what I've done," she called out excitedly to the project coordinator. Surprised to find Halima had set up a rug on a ground loom — one of the most complicated tasks of bedouin weaving — she asked how she had learned to do it.

"My grandmother taught me!"

After going on the pilgrimage with her weaving income, Halima's grandmother died, but not before passing on her

craft to her granddaughter, Halima, who had a ninth grade education, proceeded to work her way up to production manager.

Today she helps oversee the work of 979 women in 11 villages. Now married and the mother of two, she drives the project truck to work, has been to Europe on a trade show, and just finished building a house she helped her husband finance with a loan from the weaving project.

Aya, who goes to work with her mother where she naps and plays at the weaving centre, is one of over 2000 children who have benefited from the project.

(Continued on page 5)

The desire to try, the will to succeed

ONE OF the Bani Hamida women receiving visitors at the exhibition on opening day was Halima Qa'aidah with her 1½-year-old daughter Aya. Halima was 16 when Save the Children came to Bani Hamida Mountain in 1985 to set up weaving, health and agricultural projects with her bedouin community. As she watched her mother, aunts and grandmother produce the first rugs of the weaving project and get paid for them, she wanted to join, too. But like most of the other young women her age, who had been the first on the mountain to go to school, she hadn't planned to

take up weaving, and didn't know how.

Then one day she flagged down the project car as it passed her home in the village of Makawir. "Come and see what I've done," she called out excitedly to the project coordinator. Surprised to find Halima had set up a rug on a ground loom — one of the most complicated tasks of bedouin weaving — she asked how she had learned to do it.

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WHAT'S GOING ON

- ★ Choir recital by Die Meistersinger at the Royal Cultural Centre at 8:00 p.m.
- ★ Drama in Arabic entitled "Land and Man" by students of Amman National School at Darat Al Fuman of the Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation in Jabal Lweilbeh at 8:00 p.m.
- ★ Seminar on "Cinema in Stories and Dramas" by critic Hassan Abu Ghanimeh at the Jordan Writers' Association at 6:00 p.m.
- ★ Lecture in Arabic entitled "Relations Between Inside and Outside in Building Up the Palestinian Authority" by Mr. Hussein Hijazi at Abdul Hameed Shoman

- Foundation in Jabal Amman at 6:00 p.m.
- ★ Lecture in Arabic entitled "The Contemporary German Theatre and its Effect on the Arab Theatre" by Dr. Awni Karouni at Goethe-Institut at 7:00 p.m.
- Hireb and another exhibition of ceramics by Sajida Elmesheleki at Ala Art Gallery in Wadi Sagra (Tel. 644451, 652823).
- ★ Exhibition by 46 artists entitled "He, Bonjour Monsieur La Fontaine" at the French Cultural Centre.
- ★ Exhibition of paintings by artist Salman Al Basri at Ala Art Gallery (Tel. 639303).

- ★ Book exhibition and cultural displays at the British Council (10:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m.).
- ★ Exhibition by Iraqi artist Shawkat Al Rubeai at the Italian Language Centre (9:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m.) (Tel. 669348).
- ★ Exhibition of water colour paintings by artist Itab
- ★ Exhibition by artist Helmi El-Toumi at Bahama Art Gallery (Tel. 687598).
- ★ Spring exhibition of "Artists Expressions in Wool," the Bani Hamida project of art works and rugs at the Jordan Contractors Association Building in Abdoun (Tel. 612169).

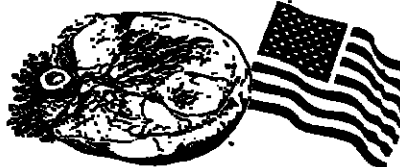
Guess what's cooking at the Marriott?

A lot at Al-Mansaf Restaurant where the evenings are sizzling with deliciously appetizing specials.



On Sundays, we keep the fires hot on the coals for STEAK NIGHT. A La Carte.

Every Saturday is CHINESE NIGHT. Chinese specialties A La Carte.



Thursdays are time for our poolside barbecue at our AL MANSAF PATIO starting from 7:00 p.m. for JD 9.000++ per person.

Every Friday from noon to 4:00 p.m. bring the whole family to the best BRUNCH in town at the Marriott. Price JD 9.750 inclusive. Children below one meter eat for free.



From Saturday to Thursday, take a break from work and try our EXECUTIVE LUNCH, it's exciting, satisfying and incredible value at only JD 8.500++ per person.



P.S. Look out for our new Marriott Garden.

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Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published in English by the Jordan Press Foundation. Established 1975.

الجزيرة الأردنية السياسية اليومية المستقلة المنشورة بالإنجليزية من قبل المؤسسة الصحفية الأردنية

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Hopes of a new era

THOSE PAST days of May, 1993 will certainly go into the annals of history as a major turning point in the struggle between Israelis and Arabs over the land of Palestine. What has been happening during these reverses a 45-year-old trend that witnessed Israelis chasing Palestinians away from their homeland and trying hard as they could to silence their resistance. But the return to the deployment of Palestinian police in the Gaza Strip and the city of Jericho cannot be seen except as a rolling back of the Zionist project to take every inch of Palestine and the Israeli denial of the legitimate and national rights of Palestinians.

The euphoric reaction of the Palestinian people to the deployment of Palestinian police in Gaza and Jericho and the withdrawal of Israeli police is a testimony to the yearning of the Palestinians to rid themselves of occupation and to realise their own independent state.

In a few days, a Palestinian national authority, headed by PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat will take over from the occupation authorities. The new authority, composed of Palestinians from the occupied territories and the diaspora, will certainly have as its main goals the realisation of the dream of statehood, the total withdrawal of the Israeli forces from all of the occupied territories, including Jerusalem, and resolution of the issue of Palestinian refugees in accordance with international resolutions.

The new Palestinian authority will for sure face formidable challenges, not least among them the building of the infrastructure of a state. But one of the most pressing challenges for the Palestinian leadership remains that of tackling the internal opposition, both on the right and left of the main stream PLO. Arafat had during the past week been trying to draw to his side credible Palestinians from both the occupied territories and the diaspora. For this he deserves to be commended. What Palestinians need now more than any time before is to rally behind their leadership and lend support to the new authority in its awesome task.

Even if Arafat and his colleagues have not gotten everything right so far, as critics strongly contend, what is needed now is for the whole Palestinian people to do their best and utmost to help transform the dream into reality and, along the road, to correct mistakes of the past.

Elsewhere in the Arab World, people might not be as euphoric as their brethren in the West Bank and Gaza because they did not physically have to endure 27 years of brutal occupation. But Arabs have to rejoice when Palestinians have managed to rekindle hope in their cause and are moving towards freedom again. Refugees, whose plight has been relegated to final status negotiations, are still apprehensive. However, as His Majesty King Hussein pointed out on Wednesday, we stand fully behind our Palestinian brothers and sisters, and we will lend them all the support that we can muster. Not only that. We also look forward to the day when the Palestinians are finally free and when we together can shape a common destiny and future.

The task ahead is enormous, and none of us can be overconfident about the chances of total salvation. For the moment, however, we have to be hopeful that the Palestinians have started on the road to liberation and prosperity.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

AL RA'I Arabic daily described Washington's favourable response to Jordan's demand of halting inspection of Aqaba-bound vessels as a victory for the Jordanian view which, the paper said, are just and legitimate. Though the American response does not fully cater to the requirements of the Jordanian demands, halting the inspection is a very significant step because it facilitates navigation from and to Aqaba on the one hand and saves the Jordanian economy from a great deal of harm on the other, said the paper. Needless to say, the halting of the inspection of vessels represents a retreat from former hostile positions on the part of the enforcers of the sanctions on Iraq, added the paper. Halting the inspection is a necessary step to ensure Jordan's return to the peace process as demanded by Jordan and a good and positive step on the part of the world community, which, the paper said, should now think about ways to compensate the Kingdom for the great injustice done to it as a result of the Gulf crisis and the imposition of the blockade. The paper said that it is hoped that the whole blockade imposed on the region would end so that regional tension can end and its people can direct their attention towards construction and progress.

COUNTRIES whose regimes do not see eye to eye with the United States are considered by Washington as helping and encouraging world terrorism and these include Syria, Iraq, Libya, Sudan and Iran, all Arab or Muslim nations, according to Bassam Emouash, a columnist in Al Ra'i daily. The writer said that it is the United States which continues to condone Israel's terrorist actions against the Arab countries in general and the Palestinians in particular. And by doing so, the United States is considered as the worst terrorist nation on earth. Not only does the United States offer mass destruction weapons to the Jewish state to kill Arabs, but it also protects the killers at the United Nations Security Council and other organisations, he added. Recalling what he called America's war of terror against the Vietnamese people, the writer said that Washington continues to practice the worst kind of terrorism against the people of Iraq and the Muslim Nations at large by trying to starve the innocent population through the embargo. He said that the United States is practicing terrorism against the Arabs and Muslims in the name of the United Nations and within the framework of the so-called new world order.

JORDANIAN PERSPECTIVE

The message in the bridge theatrics

By Dr. Musa Keilani

THE PROTRACTED delay in the entry of Palestinian policemen to Jericho was no coincidence; the Israelis wanted it that way, if only to tell the Palestinians and the world at large in clear terms that nothing has actually changed with the Sept. 13 signing of the declaration of principles with the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) in Washington and the May 4 agreement on modalities of autonomy in Cairo. The Palestinians remain captive to Israeli whims and fancies and the occupation army remains very much in control of things; this is the message that Israel wanted to impress upon everyone.

For all practical and technical purposes, Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and Foreign Minister Shimon Peres as well as a few others in the ruling clique in the Jewish state appear to have a genuine desire for peace with the Palestinians and the rest of Arab World. The motives and the terms that they seek may not be what we had hoped for, but the fact remains that they do want a settlement with the Arabs. But that simply not enough.

Since signing the landmark autonomy deal in Washington in September and notwithstanding the provisions for "final-status" negotiations, Israel has been sending very strong signals that self-rule could be an end in itself. Indeed, it would have been naive to expect otherwise, particularly in the case of a strong occupying power supported by some of the strongest powers in the world facing a militarily and economically weak people under occupation directed by a politically diluted leadership in diaspora.

It was up to the Arab World to pick up the challenge and shape things in a way that serves Arab Palestinian interests. It did not happen.

History will not forgive the Arab World for having pushed the Palestinians into a situation where they had no choice but to accept the dictates of their occupier. But that is an issue the Arabs have to live with themselves and it will also be naive to expect Israel not to exploit the divisions in the Arab World to advance its objectives.

But, having forced the leadership of the people under occupation into an uncertain equation, the Israeli leadership has a moral obligation to ensure that its actions are compatible with the requirements of an equitable process.

Messrs. Rabin and Company have to realise that there are strong elements in the Israeli army, down to the second lieutenants and non-commissioned officers manning the western side of the King Hussein Bridge, which are opposed to the

entire peace process and that they would like to do everything in their power, directly and indirectly, to throw a spanner in the works of the Israeli-Palestinian agreement.

Despite its shortcomings, the agreement happens to be the most tangible breakthrough in the peace process, and Mr. Rabin, Mr. Peres and all others who support it should appreciate that the simple signing of the accord was not enough, and that they should move on the ground to prepare their army and others to accept it. If they had done so in time, the 800 or so Palestinian policemen would not have been stuck at the Jordanian side of the King Hussein Bridge for six or seven days.

For us here in Jordan, it is very painful to see the vanguard of a Palestinian security force propelled into a situation where it had no choice but to go through the loops and jumps designed by the Israeli army.

Obviously, the main objective of the Israelis in posing one hurdle after another to delay the entry of the policemen through the bridge was to break the spirits of the proud men. The Palestine Liberation Army (PLA) soldiers have fought wars to liberate their land and have always held their head high as professional soldiers regardless of the setbacks they suffered as a result of the ambitions of their political leaders. They are no less professional than their Israeli counterparts across the river. If anything, they are a notch better; they have not indulged in breaking the bones of innocent civilians or torturing children.

The Israeli leaders are mistaken if they think that the humiliation that the police force had to suffer at the bridge will indeed serve their objective. At this point in time, they happen to have an upper hand in terms of military strength and mighty high-tech weapons, but the human spirit and yearning to live in freedom is mightier.

The "technicalities" that the Israelis cited as the reason for not allowing in the policemen across the bridge are nothing but a smokescreen and a pressure point on PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat. They have said as much in direct and indirect terms.

From what we could see from our vantage point, there is an ironical twist in the whole process. It is obvious that it is as much as in the interest of the so-called peace-loving Israeli leadership as that of the leadership of the PLO to see the process launched with the signing of the May 4 accord get ahead as smoothly as possible. On the other hand, the Israeli approach to the "technicalities" of the process appears to be clearly designed to undermine the confidence of the Palesti-

nian people in their leadership.

The Israeli demand that Mr. Arafat nominate his "autonomy cabinet" before the policemen enter Jericho has sent a clear message to the Palestinians at large that Israel is living up to the perception that the Jewish state only wants to consolidate its grip on the occupied territories rather than loosening it.

No matter how anyone looks at it, the terms and provisions of the Cairo agreement and the Paris accord on economic ties give Israel the final say in running the autonomy in all its aspects. It strengthens the theory that autonomous Jericho and Gaza are designed to be, in the Israeli view, a parallel to the "security zone" that the Jewish state maintains in South Lebanon and Mr. Arafat is destined to be another Antoine Lahd and the Palestinian police force another South Lebanon Army.

The experience of the policemen camped at the King Hussein Bridge since Sunday shakes our hopes that our brethren across the River Jordan are on the threshold of a new era of freedom and an end to their suffering under occupation might be ill-founded.

At this point in history, Israel, by virtue of its occupation, supported by some of the most sophisticated war and military machinery and the political leadership of the world's sole superpower, is in a position to call the shots. No doubt, it will seek to continue to do so in every aspect of Palestinian autonomy in the days to come.

Instead of advancing prospects for a just, comprehensive and durable settlement to the problem based on land in exchange for peace in the final status negotiations in two or three years, Israel will only be perpetuating and legitimising its occupation of the land.

By scrambling the situation in the ground, Israel will be doing nothing but setting things in such a way that liberation and independence of the Palestinians become nothing but a distant dream.

For us in Jordan, it adds to our pains and misgivings over the whole process. As a country and people, we supported and went along with the decision of the Palestine Liberation Organisation as the decision of the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. We still do and will continue to do so. But our agony turns more bitter when we see the Palestinian leadership being slapped down with one fait accompli after another.

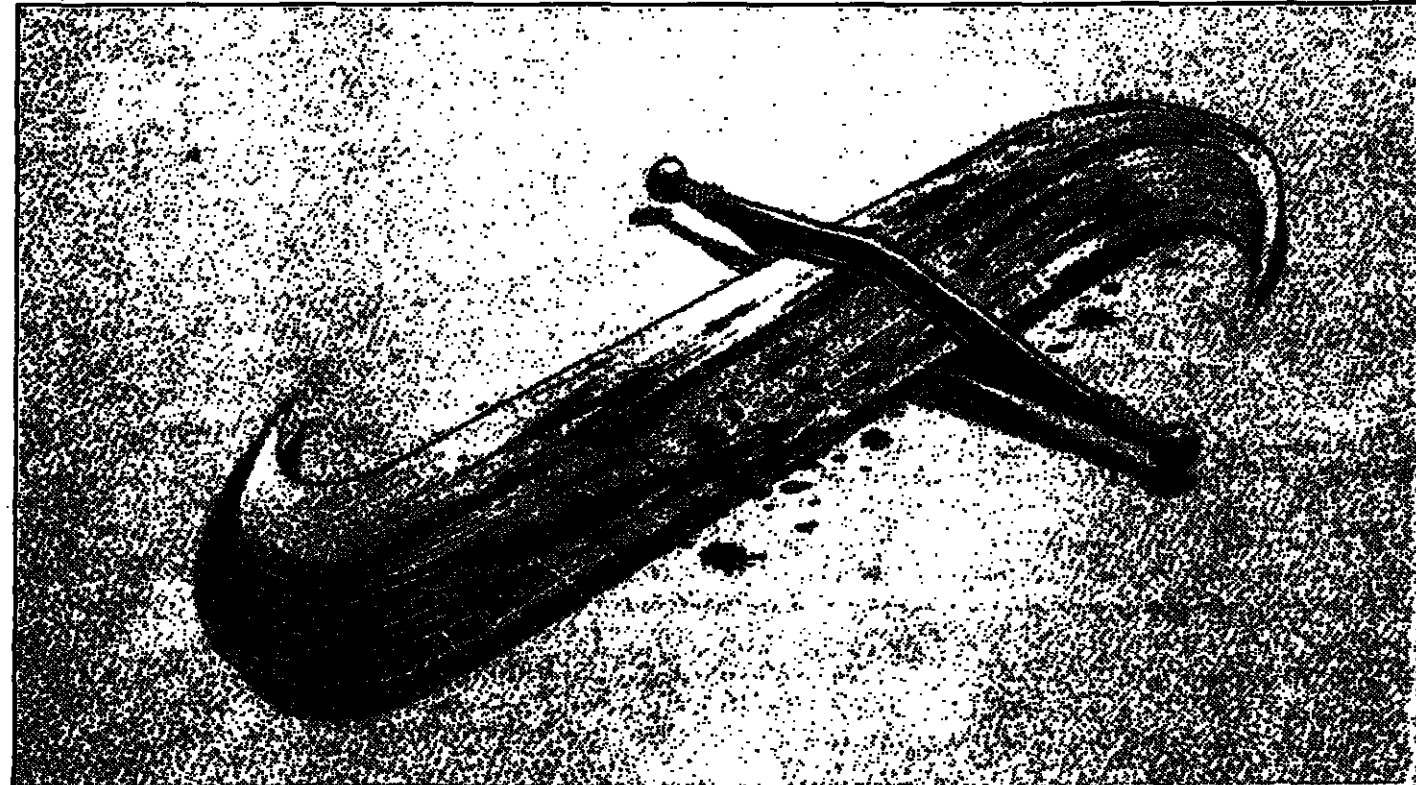
Reviewed by Elia Nasrallah

THE CONFLICT in Yemen was given prominence by the local press in the past week. Questions related to the peace process and the Palestinian-Israeli agreement as well as domestic affairs were also covered.

War is not the way to protect unity, and the Yemeni leaders should realise this fact and should hear it from the masses, said Taher Al Adwan, a columnist in Al Dustour. The Yemeni people have been united before the unity of three years ago, and their destiny and aspirations have been the same without the formal political move to unite the two sides, said the writer. He said through peace, the two sides can progress and through dialogue can build a political entity acceptable to the two sides. The present war, he added, can only shake the Arab masses' capability to create any unity among their states in the future.

His views were echoed by Saleh Al Qallab, another writer in Al Dustour, who said unity should not be created through force and the use of arms. When Syria chose to end its unity with Egypt, Cairo did not resort to war to retain the unity of the United Arab Republic, said the writer. Unity between two states, he added, can never be formed with force and coercion as such practices would only backfire later on as we can see in Yemen today.

The war in Yemen has shattered the dreams of the Arab masses in unity and will no doubt deter Arabs from discussing any form of merger in the future, said Sultan Al Hattab in Al Ra'i. The writer said that it is disgusting to see the Yemeni leaders at one other's throats after signing their reconciliation agreement in Amman with their



THE WEEK IN PRINT

Yemenis should silence the guns

own free will. What is the use of raising slogan of unity by mere words and destroying this unity after it has materialised through shameful deeds, asked the writer. Arab leaders, he said, should realise that their masses cannot from now on be deceived with bright slogans and that unity can never come about with guns and rockets.

In the view of Fakhri Saleh, a columnist in Al Dustour, the Yemeni issue can crop up any time in any other Arab society and country. He said that in Yemen, as in many other Arab states, the institutions have been set up on the tribal basis and not on modern civil concepts. He said that both

warring factions in Yemen have been able to reach power by support they got from their tribal friends and allies who, he said, are responsible for triggering the war.

Echoing similar views, Mahmoud Rimawi, a writer in Al Ra'i, said that the war in Yemen is a catastrophe for the Arab Nation, and has proved that the worst enemies of the Arabs are the Arabs themselves. The writer said that the devastating war in Yemen can enhance no unity between the north and the south nor can it achieve the national aspirations of the Yemeni people.

The war in Yemen reflects the political bankruptcy of

the leaders in the north and south of the country alike, said Mohammad Masalha, a columnist in Sawt Al Shaab. The writer said that former attempts of unity between Jordan and Iraq, Syria and Egypt, Syria and Libya all ended without the resort to war or civil strife even the unity between the two banks of the Jordan River ended legally at least without any disturbances, he added. The Yemeni leaders, he said, should have given themselves more time for dialogue and should have discussed the situation at hand before even starting a war of words.

The war in Yemen, said Mohammad Kawash in Al

Dustour, is the making of certain Arab countries which do not wish to see the country united any more. The writer said that certain Arab states which have been dissatisfied by Yemen's stand during the Gulf crisis are now stirring trouble for its leaders and fuelling the conflict. He said that though unity should be preserved at all costs, the Yemeni leaders can still retreat from their present position and opt for dialogue to ensure that goal.

Commenting on the Cairo agreement by the Palestinian and Israeli leaders, Taher Adwan, a columnist in Al Dustour, said that the Arab masses are convinced that the

Oslo deal was meant as a transitional move helping the Palestinians to embark on the first step towards fulfilling their national dream. He said that Jordan and the other Arab states ought to back the Palestinians, who are now assuming self-rule and limited freedom. What is required in the end is the full implementation of U.N. Security Council Resolution 242 but at the moment the Palestinians require all the backing they can get.

Sultan Al Hattab echoed the view by saying the one thousand mile trip starts with a little step. The columnist, who writes for Al Ra'i, said that the Palestinians who arrived in Gaza and Jericho will be waiting for real backing from their Arab kinsmen in Jordan and other Arab states. The road to full independence and statehood is long, he said, but there is need for the Palestinians to get support in order to reach the end of this road.

Fahd Al Fanek, a columnist in Al Ra'i, came out in full opposition to the government's recent measures that facilitate the travel across the bridges of the River Jordan. Nothing happened to justify the new measures which, he said, are bound to ease matters for Israel and not for the Palestinians. The writer said that with the presence of huge masses of Palestinian population in the occupied Arab lands, particularly in Gaza, the burden on Israel becomes great and the Israeli leaders would be forced to try to find a solution. He said that the government, while realising the plight of the Palestinians under occupation, should not make the matter easy for the Israelis by helping the Palestinians to come and settle in the East Bank. The measures are wrong and should be rescinded, said the writer.

By G.H. Jassan

JERUSALEM — "This is not it," was how one Palestinian sadly dismissed what should have been the joyous culmination of the long national liberation struggle of the Palestinian people, on the day of the signing in Cairo of the Israel-PLO autonomy agreement. That negative reaction was part of the widespread feeling. Despite the rhetoric from Cairo, the Cairo deal brought no "new dawn", no "new era".

Indeed, observing events in Cairo and the veinglorious reaction to them by outsiders, as "a new dawn of a new era", and watching the very different events on the ground on the West Bank and the very different reactions to them of local people was like having double vision.

extraordinarily lucky to throw up two big men precisely when it needed them.

That is why the South African struggle has ended in victory and that of the Palestinians is, at most, semi-victory, or, more accurately, semi-defeat.

Apart from the tremendous gap in leadership, one other reason for the Palestinian-South African differences is that the present leader of the Palestinian struggle was in a desperate hurry to get an agreement, any sort of agreement, because he wanted to go home as a victor, and also because the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) was bankrupt and the sooner it got a settlement the sooner it would receive the very large sums of money it has been promised.

What informed and intelligent Palestinians are particularly afraid of is that the leadership of the "inside" that has emerged from the intifada is, as promised by Mr. Arafat, going to be replaced by a new leadership from "outside",

from the PLO headquarters in Tunis.

And there is this fear not only because these persons could be tainted with the corruption that has generally pervaded the Tunis operation, but also because these Palestinians-in-exile have no experience of living in a civil society like that in which the Palestinians in the occupied territories have lived, despite its limitations.

Another reason for fear is that the agreement, painstakingly drafted and 200 pages long, blocks every possibility for the local autonomy arrangement to develop into an independent state, which is what every Palestinian really wants.

A proof that the PLO does not understand this feeling of its people is that there is already talk that the election to be held for the new Palestinian authority, which was planned for July, is to be postponed till October. Suspicious and anxious minds see that as a possible first step towards the imposition by Mr. Arafat of an

incipient or not-so-incipient dictatorship of his own Fatah faction of the PLO. There were already mutterings about "the Fatah things". Little wonder, then, that leading Palestinian figures are backing away from serving in the interim Palestinian authority which, as usual hitherto, is to be nominated by Mr. Arafat.

What only fuels the genuine worry over the PLO's almost complete lack of preparedness for its takeover from the Israeli military authorities, as well as its inexperience, is that these worries are airily dismissed by Mr. Arafat with a remark like, "I ruled Lebanon from Fakhani" (a Palestinian district in Beirut), which only shows how far from reality his thinking, and his memory, are. This correspondent was in Beirut in 1976 when, at the request of the coalition of Nasserites and Socialists then in power in West Beirut, the PLO assumed charge of an area of West Beirut, not of "Lebanon". But in a matter of weeks, the PLO administration collapsed in confusion because of inexperience,

corruption and favouritism; precisely the dangers facing the PLO in the two autonomous areas of Gaza and Jericho.

While these areas have been criticised as being mere "bantustans", it is also being pointed out that they are not even bantustans, which had wider powers than those granted to Gaza-Jericho. Because of their "autonomy", daily life for people living in them is now more difficult than before. Because, for example, persons leaving them to go anywhere else now have to obtain not just one permit from the Israelis but also a second one from the autonomous regime.

What the West Bankers particularly and urgently want the PLO to do is not so much to establish an autonomous administration but to get the Israelis to lift the "closure" imposed on the territories which cuts them off from the markets, offices, hospitals, schools and places of worship in Jerusalem, the future capital of an inde-

pendent Palestine.

The suspicion is growing that the "closure", particularly as it affects Jerusalem, is not aimed at increasing Israeli "security" but at quickly absorbing Jerusalem into Israel so that it will remain exclusively the Israeli capital, in defiance of several U.N. resolutions. Some PLO leaders are threatening that if the "closure" is maintained, the resentment against the hardship it creates could bring about the collapse of the whole Israeli-Palestine agreement. That would be welcome to the majority of Palestinians, but probably not at the price of continued "closure".

Because bitterness against the very partial agreements reached by Mr. Arafat and his team is running high and strong, it came as no surprise to hear a leading personality in Gaza say of Mr. Arafat that "he is not Palestinian, he is not a Muslim". A comprehensive and candid condemnation. And as another politically perceptive Palestinian put it, "the moment the first stone hits Mr. Arafat's car when he returns, he will be stripped of his charismatic leadership; and there will be more than one stone."

Artists bring cottage industry to new plateaus

(Continued from page 3)

has tried to decipher these letters visually — not only what they mean as language but their geometric power.

Turning to the rug matching it, designed in tan, fuchsia and blue by Naha Mansour, he went on: "This rug has amazing complex shapes. Normally flat weaving lends itself to triangles, squares and stripes. But here we have the most intricate work. It's interesting to see how all these artists and designers have tried to push the weaving technique beyond its limits. The width of the carpet is also limited. It was a challenge for them to work with the medium."

As former production manager and now the designer of the Bani Hamida project, Naha Mansour learned five years ago how to design and execute rugs on the job, and many of the other designs in the exhibition are hers. She and Dina Shafiq, the engineer who helps coordinate production, worked closely with the women on the mountain in the execution of the artists' designs.

"Nawal Abdallah is very much into composition," Mr. Khammash continued in his tour of the exhibition. She composes with a grid and has very successfully translated it from her two acrylic paintings into woven pieces. They are visual games. In every window is a different picture to look at. It's a play between order and chaos.

"Reham Ghassib is a storyteller. Her paintings were done especially for this event. She uses watercolours like toothpaste in a very distinctive way that is full of spirit and very powerful. She likes brilliant colours and life — the loom, a woman spinning, a cat."

"She works free from rules," he said pointing to her Breugel-like scenes of bedouin women's life.

He turned the corner to a display by Samer Tabaa. "Samer is a sculptor. (His work) deals with mass and physical matter. Artists work with surfaces. Samer deals with wool as another element provided by nature to be shaped. So his rug — a black and red grid on white entitled 'Checkmate' — appears like an architectural sculpture in the same way his two paintings of graphite lines interwoven in grids, too. While Reham's work is a detailed personal

rendering of human behaviour, Samer's is a research of mathematics on how we can use wool and graphite to shape and weave."

"Texture and colour are the keys to Khaled Khreis' paintings. He uses calligraphy in a way that some lines sink into paper and others come out and are thus woven in and out like a rug. His paintings are often monochromatic, so it was natural for him to do the same in his designs for rugs."

Looking at Mona Saoudi's bright runners, he's a commentator. "Mona again is a sculptor who deals with two dimensions. Her work, whether in marble, wool or ink, is geometric, emphasising strong lines. Her compositions are visually balanced."

"Fo'ad has worked in fashion design. He has an awareness of fabric. And as a TV producer, he's a colourist, as can be seen in these collages and water colours. His rug (in blue, pale yellow, red and brown with matching cushions) is composed like the 'abaya' — the cloak of a desert shepherd in colours washed by the sun."

Coming to a large peach and pale green rug designed by Dodi Tabaa, he took up his analysis. "Dodi is a patternist. In dealing with patterns, she has a great ability to execute applied art and to shift a motif from a painting to a rug. There is a lot of power and energy in the way she handled all those matching motifs and colours in a single carpet. It looks like an archive of Jordan with its camels, pottery and palm trees."

A graphic artist when she first came to Jordan from Bangladesh, she also produced the colourful designer T-shirts on sale that depict clowns wearing seven different Bani Hamida rugs.

Another expatriate wife married to a Jordanian is Dazhva Khanib. Fifteen years ago she came here from Bosnia and has recently been joined by her family. In a separate room, her large rug woven in eight sections in rustic colours has been very popular with visitors. Nearby is a unique wall hanging designed by Lama Azar in black, beige, gray and off-white that goes well with a ceramic lamp by Hazem Za'bi.

"Maha Abu Ayyash's sculpture is anthropological and a

bit surrealistic," Mr. Khammash said. "Her strong peasant woman in brick-coloured clay the former and her palm reading in metal the latter." She designed a large cushion and matching rugs with an attractive diamond motif.

Noelle Shawa, now in London where some of her work is on exhibit, has embellished her paintings with large wool tassels to emphasise texture. "Her paintings look like frescoes weathered over time, the colours are so close together in tone," Mr. Khammash noticed. "They are cubical with strong emphasis on line. If you look at her carpets, they are the same."

Samia Halaby sent her designs from New York City, where she resides. They are on display with a large modern painting.

A very attractive large wall hanging in peach, turquoise and aqua was designed by three women in Bani Hamida.

Mr. Khammash — artist and architect — brought metal furniture he has been designing that is all the rage in town. His bookshelf, tall vase stands and marble-topped tables are accompanied by six delightful paintings on small pieces of wood he usually uses in the top of the vase stands furniture. "These are scenes in my office which I paint when I can't get out, to keep up my painting," he confided. The bedouin woman who did his match box would probably have liked his paintings more than his cushion.

The Jordan River Designs exhibition is also not to be missed. Elegantly displayed in the brand new villa of Ghaleb Zuweideh and his wife Nora Bisharat, its novelty, according to interior designer Marcelle Naber, is the new spring colours. Samira Othman, manager of the quilt project for five years, has put together a refreshing selection of new colour combinations that must be seen by anyone building a house requiring new bedroom furnishings or by those planning marriage soon.

The room of cotton bedcovers and cushions is a new feature for the more practically minded. Until now the fabrics used were more (watered silk), hand-woven Syrian 'sayra' fabric and traditional black 'tuber' cotton.

There is a new elaborate

quilt in blue, lavender and pale yellow Samira calls 'Jabal Al Nar,' and the bedroom collection in petroleum blue, brick and teal sent to Paris last fall is much in demand in Jordan.

Displaying the quilts are unique beds by Salim Bandak whose metal furniture is flourishing through his work with this project and Jordan Design and Trade Centre (JDTC) at the Noor-Al Hussein Foundation.

The wall hangings continue to be favourites. The large night village scene — also done in pastels for daytime — is featured in the new Insight guidebook coming out on Jordan. Picture frames, that match the quilts and village scenes, are available in many different colours.

Shirts of jeans fabric from the CJC clothing factory are embroidered in myriad designs. One of the beachbags, on display in new colours, was a hot item in the Osaka exhibition in Japan this month, in which Jordan River Designs and the weaving project participated through JEDCO.

The new Ahliya — Arabella Superstores are featuring many of our products for its opening, which gives a wonderful boost to this project," said Hana Shahin, the project manager.

The two exhibitions show a flair and spirit that have culminated in years of hard work by teams of Jordanian women — both rural and urban, educated and illiterate — who have grown and matured as they have worked together to develop these Save the Children projects, which have provided a training ground for many women in managing income generation projects.

A recent survey by anthropologist Lisa McCann found that weaving project participants contribute some 40 per cent of household income and embroidery project women 30 per cent on average. The weaving project has generated \$895,201 and Jordan River Designs, begun later, \$466,745 in wages to low income women who have few chances to find continuous, part-time, paid employment that allows them to stay home with their children, run their households and do their agricultural chores at the same time.

All proceeds from sales go to wages and other project expenses.

Police get heroes' welcome

(Continued from page 1)

had been expected since Sunday and rumours were abundant every day about their imminent arrival.

But to the surprise of most Jericho residents, it was the mostly members of the former Iraq-based Palestine Liberation Army's (PLA) Al Aqsa Brigades who entered Jericho and not members of the Jordan-based Bader Brigades. Three hundred members of the Bader Brigades were transported along a road outside the Jericho perimeter to the Gaza Strip late Thursday night. But only about 450 of the PNSF members entering Jericho were members of the Aqsa and the rest belonged to Bader.

The Israeli army, which patrolled Jericho by endless helicopter flights all day Thursday and early Friday, did its best to

keep the Palestinian population far away and widely dispersed from the PNSF members entering the Jericho and Gaza districts.

The first batch of PNSF members to enter Jericho did so late Thursday evening. They were greeted by some 500 residents of the hot and dusty Jordan Valley town at the Arab Development Society on the outer edge of town.

A buffet dinner had been prepared for the first 23 officers to enter Jericho in what was the first sight of Palestinians in arms for most people in Jericho. Over half of the enclave's 17,000 residents are under the age of 18.

In the dawn hours of Friday, 62 more officers followed the 23 and another 377 entered by 10 a.m.

Preoccupations delay accord

(Continued from page 1)

Saturday, shortly after the expected release of the details of the document.

Under the agreements, the committee, which will be headed on the Jordanian side by the deputy governor of the Central Bank of Jordan (CBJ) and on the Palestinian side by the deputy governor's counterpart from the Palestinian Economic Council for Development and Reconstruction (PECDAR), will monitor and control banking and currency affairs in the occupied territories.

Jordanian banks which have already been licensed by the CBJ to reopen their branches in the occupied territories will also come under the committee's control and supervision. All future applications for licensing will be dealt with by the committee.

The sources said Jordan had expressed reservations over a no ceiling, free-trade arrangement between the Kingdom and the autonomous territories and but then dropped its reservations. The Kingdom had suggested a \$300 million ceiling for trade, but the PLO could not meet that volume because of the Israeli-imposed curbs in the Paris agreement.

"We decided to keep trade open-ended in the initial stage," said the Jordanian source. "We hope to develop it further as we go along further in our economic cooperation."

There were no formal meetings on Thursday. Royal Court Chief Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker and the King's advisors held talks with the PLO delegation. No details were available on the discussions.

"We have forwarded the agreements to the PLO Executive Committee and are awaiting its response," said the Palestinian source. "We hope to receive the committee's endorsement anytime now."

"Hopefully, we could wind up the meetings early Saturday and release the details," added the source.

The self-rule authority will use the Jordanian dinar in all its dealing, the source said. "The dinar will be the main currency in circulation in autonomous territories as well as the rest of the occupied lands," said the source.

All other currencies, including the Israeli shekel, will also be used, added the source.

The Paris agreement states that the shekel will be "a legal tender" in the autonomous territories.

Israelis leave Gaza, Jericho

(Continued from page 1)

from the Al Aqsa Brigade said.

Mahmoud Musalam, 27, born in Kuwait of a Jericho family, was among the 700 policemen arriving Friday.

"I have never been in my hometown Jericho before," he said. "This gives me hope of a bright future. I will do my best to cooperate and serve my people."

Meanwhile, Israel completed a redeployment from all the southern Gaza Strip, apart from Jewish settlements which remain under army protection.

"Everything south of the river is in the hands of the Palestinian police," a senior Israeli military official said. The river, Wadi Gaza, cuts across the Strip south of the Jewish settlement of Netzarim.

During the night security installations were evacuated at Khan Yunis, the last town in the south to be evacuated following Deir Al Balah, Bureij, Nuseirat and Rafah. Facilities in Gaza City were

to be handed over Sunday and transfer of authority wrapped up on Wednesday.

Unlike the over-crowded Strip, population nearly 800,000, the Jericho police will run a quiet oasis known as the world's oldest and lowest town at 250 metres below sea level.

Palestinian officials said more than 1,600 soldiers so far poured in to Jericho the Gaza Strip.

A total of 9,000 are deployed across Gaza. Jericho, most drawn from PLA, and named the Palestinian National Security Force. About 1,500 will be deployed in Jericho.

"Yes, we're already to direct traffic," Mahmoud Yusef, who stood in the m. Jericho road, shaking and embracing well amid long lines of cars.

"We will work day and night, all the time. We need to sleep, we feel now that we are in our land."

Yemen's armies fight on

(Continued from page 1)

through southern defences.

Despite the claims and counter-claims, nobody here doubted that Saleh and his 7,000 residents had been dealt a severe blow, amid reports that the town's hospital had been evacuated.

Some 70 villagers also arrived Thursday in Aden from Al Uwarrah, fleeing shelling. They have been temporarily housed in a school in an Aden suburb, where the first emergency was the birth of a baby boy.

The mother Hamida sat on the floor of an unfurnished classroom surrounded by other women, her eyes saddened and troubled by fears for the future.

Only her husband remained with the women, the other men having left to attend Friday prayers in the mosques or to search for an empty apartment to squat in, rather than the camp offer by the local governor.

Supplies of vegetable oil, sugar, a sack of Indian rice and soap powder provided by the

southern authorities were stacked in a corner of the schoolyard.

Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak said Thursday he saw no hope of a quick end to the war in Yemen even if northern forces entered Aden.

He was speaking in an interview with the Arabic service of Radio Monte Carlo, the Egyptian government newspaper Al Ahram reported.

Mr. Mubarak said that by resorting to force Yemeni leaders were setting the scene for chronic vendettas.

Most of his criticism seemed to be directed at the north-eastern, who have refused mediation and have vowed to crush what they say is a rebellion by southern secessionists.

"Northern forces reaching Aden would not mean a solution to the problem... war will not ensure unity, on the contrary, it will be an incitement to secession," he said.

"Entering Aden would mean occupation... they (Yemeni leaders) are assuming me that the matter will end but in fact I do not see any hope."

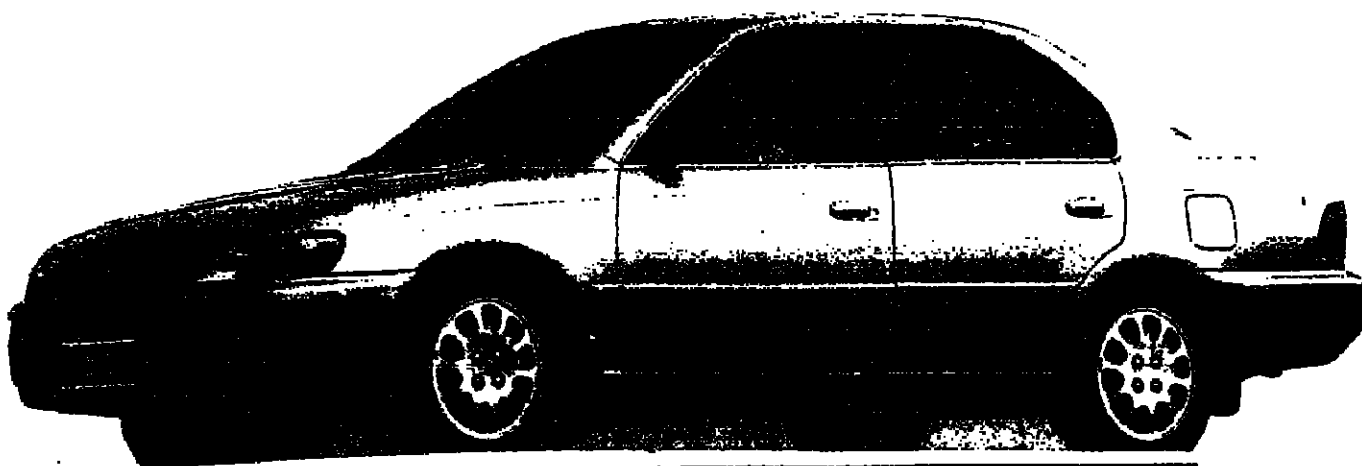
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Africa sets up bank in campaign to boost trade

NAIROBI (R) — Africa is launching a campaign to promote trade and woo back investors tired of the continent's seemingly endless political and economic woes, and investment bank official said Friday.

The African Development Bank (AFDB) will set the campaign in motion next September with the opening of the African Export-Import Bank (Afrimbank).

The AFDB, Africa's top investment institution, will run the bank as a subsidiary charged with promoting intra-African trade, strengthening trade finance institutions and boosting external trade and winning foreign investment.

"As the only specialised regional trade finance institution, the bank will bring about sustained economic growth and will contribute to regional integration of our continent," Afrimbank President Christopher Edorou said in Nairobi.

He was speaking to reporters on the sidelines of the AFDB's annual general meeting.

"Our greatest challenge is to transform the bank from a nascent to an effective and viable vehicle for promoting intra and extra African trade from their present low levels," Mr. Edorou said of the new bank to be based in Egypt.

Africa's share of world trade now stands at two per cent.

Afrimbank will have combined shareholding from African governments, their central

banks, financial institutions and private investors from within and outside Africa, Mr. Edorou added.

Shareholders held their first meeting in Nigeria last October after the bank was set up with authorised capital of up to \$750 million.

Up to 35 per cent of equity or \$262.5 million is held by class "A" shareholders comprising African states, regional and sub-regional African institutions.

Some 40 per cent or \$300 million is held by class "B" shareholders, consisting of African public and private banks and financial institutions and public and private investors.

Another 25 per cent of \$187.5 million is for class "C" shareholders, consisting of international financial institutions and economic organisations and non-African banks, financial institutions and public and private investors.

As of April 30, a total of 29 African countries had signed the agreement establishing the bank and so far 12 countries and three multinational institutions have ratified the agreement and deposited their instruments of ratification, Mr. Edorou said.

The operational objectives of the bank will be to:

— Extend direct credit to eligible African exporters by providing pre- and post-shipment finance, to extend short-term credit and medium-

term loans to African exporters and importers.

— Promote and finance intra-African trade, non-traditional exports, finance imports needed for export development such as spare parts and raw materials promote and provide insurance covering commercial and non-commercial risks associated with African exports.

— Promote and finance South-South trade between African and other countries.

On Thursday, African countries and aid donors failed to agree on replenishing the soft loan fund of the AFDB.

In talks that ended late Thursday, the two sides came close to agreement on a replenishment worth 1.9 billion AFDB units of account (U.A.), or around \$2.6 billion, sources said.

But there was no agreement on which African states should be able to borrow from the bank, and which should be eligible only for the interest-free loans from the African Development Fund.

"No decision has been set yet. But there will be another meeting, probably in early July, presumably in Abidjan," a senior delegate from one European country said.

The AFDB headquarters is in Abidjan.

Donor countries are alarmed at the mounting arrears on loans from the bank, totalling more than \$700 million.

Congress passes Clinton \$1.5 trillion budget

WASHINGTON (R) — President Bill Clinton's \$1.5 trillion spending plan for fiscal 1995 won final approval in Congress Friday with a 53-46 vote in the Senate, putting the country's budget deficit on a downward path.

"For the first time since Harry Truman was president there will be three years in a row of declining deficits," said Senate Budget Committee member Jim Sasser, a Tennessee Democrat.

The budget projects revenues of \$1,338 trillion, spending of \$1,513 trillion. The difference between the two is the deficit, \$175 billion.

The measure passed the House of Representatives earlier this month. It does not need a presidential signature, because it sets the outline for Congress to make final decisions on government spending for fiscal 1995 starting Oct. 1.

The biggest ticket items in the budget are social security at \$337 billion, defence at \$271 billion, interest at \$213 billion and Medicare at \$161 billion.

The measure includes \$13 billion reduction over five years in spending caps on discretionary spending, starting with a \$540 million reduction in fiscal 1995.

Weekly analysis of movements and trends of major world currencies

This report is provided by Naser Nabulsi private client group at Merrill Lynch-Dubai. Rates are given as of Wednesday, May 11, 1994.

Overview

Fundamental view: Massive intervention by central banks last week and an apparent shift in dollar and trade policy by the Clinton administration suggests that currency markets could be at an important turning point. After coming under sharp pressure, the dollar has rallied to the DM/U.S.D 1.67 and JPY/U.S.D 104.5 levels amid reports that the Clinton administration now supports tight monetary policy and a stronger dollar to curb potential inflation pressures. Reports that the Clinton administration is backing away from its aggressive push for trade concessions from Japan is also a plus for the dollar against the yen in the near term.

With the potential for Germany's discount rate to be cut only one more time this year following the 50 basis point cut on May 11, we have moderated our forecast for the Deutschmark to a 12-month target of DM/U.S.D 1.75. We still expect Japan's trade surplus — politics or not — to keep upward pressure on the yen in the long term, and maintain our 12-month target of JPY/U.S.D 95.

Technical View: Aided by massive central bank intervention in support of the U.S. dollar, the dollar index was up 0.6% for the week ended May 6. This gain broke a string of three straight weekly losses. Sentiment has been improving in recent weeks but is still no better than neutral. Continued strength into Monday and Tuesday of this week has allowed short term momentum to turn up from an oversold condition and is even beginning to put pressure on medium term momentum.

Thus, the prospects for a potentially important May low appear to be improving. Support exists at 91.20 and 90.30. The ability to rally back through the 93.50-94.00 range would add substance to the bottom-building argument; a move through 95.30 would probably clinch it.

Japanese Yen

Fundamental view: Fearing a rout in the dollar, the Clinton administration has reportedly resigned itself to the need for tighter monetary policy and a stronger dollar to brake growth and curb potential inflationary pressures in the U.S. The administration is also giving signals that it will back away from its aggressive push for trade concessions for Japan, which appears to be linked to its changed policy on the dollar. Following massive dollar-support operations by central banks last week, changing perceptions of U.S. dollar policy have contributed to a rebound in the dollar to the JPY 104.5 level following a test of the JPY/U.S.D 100 level in early May.

With the U.S. expected to hike the federal funds rate and the discount rate by 50 basis points sometime soon, and further monetary tightening expected by mid-year, interest rate trends could lend support to the dollar in the near term. Long-term capital inflows into Japan, which reached record levels of \$17.5 billion and \$21.9 billion in February and March may also let up or reverse in coming months, helping the dollar to stabilise or rise a bit further from current levels.

But longer-term, we think the trade issue will resurface if our forecast for a Japanese current account surplus of \$127 billion this year is close to the mark. We continue to expect the weight of that surplus, relative to underlying private sector capital flows, to push the dollar toward our 12-month target of 95 yen.

Technical view: The Japanese yen fell 0.9% versus the U.S. dollar during the week ended May 6 and dropped an additional 2.0% on Monday and Tuesday. Sentiment remains neutral. Both short and medium term momentum indicators are peaking, suggesting that the rally from last March's low (near 106 Y/U.S.\$), and perhaps from last January's low (near 113) is coming to an end. Given that long term oscillators are also deteriorating, the currency may well be positioned for its most extended period of weakness in months.

At the least, it is likely that any nearby strength will not be technically confirmed. The pressures are, therefore, mounting. With that in mind, 106-110 is viewed as significant support; a breakdown through that range would do much to confirm the existence of a top. With the recent move to new highs, 97-98 is now indicated resistance.

Deutschmark

Fundamental view: Following concerted dollar-buying intervention by central banks in Europe, Japan, and the U.S. last week, the Bundesbank appears to be cooperating with international efforts to support the dollar by cutting its interest rates as well. On May 11, the Bundesbank cut its official discount rate by 50 basis

Drachma under pressure

ATHENS (R) — Greek markets were hammered in a "Friday the 13th" scenario with interest rates soaring, stocks falling and funds fleeing during a speculative attack on the drachma.

"Pressures will continue and interest rates will rise further," said Antonis Halaris, treasurer at Banque Nationale de Paris.

The currency has come under pressure on expectations of faster sliding or even a devaluation before July 1 when Greece removes all remaining restrictions on capital movements.

Mr. Halaris said attacks on the drachma could last until then and he expected the central bank to defend it through interest rate hikes.

Dealers said the central bank poured in about \$1 billion to defend the drachma at the official fixing. The figure, more than 10 per cent of Greece's foreign reserves in February, could not be confirmed independently.

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR SATURDAY MAY 14, 1994

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

GENERAL TENDENCIES:

You are now in a good position to improve relationships with others by extending some courtesy or kindness and to correct any possible error that is keeping your business affairs from running smoothly.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Find out how you stand with others and do whatever is needed to improve relations with them. Try to understand your mate's view.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Make new acquaintances who can help to enrich your life in many ways. Attend a group meeting that is worthwhile to you in the future.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Study your surroundings and make plans for improvement. Allow time to engage in a favourite hobby with congenials you enjoy the company with.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Take part in new activities that are fun for you but first know all the facts concerning them. Think constructively of the procedure.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Your mate may have a change of attitude, so go along with new ideas for best results. Take it easy tonight and express happiness.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Show more interest in

civic affairs and gain the respect of others. You can make this a most productive day for any activities required.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Improve your environment so that it is more inspiring and brings you greater comfort. Come to a better understanding with mate.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Listen to what a good friend has to suggest for greater pleasure ahead. Take health treatments and improve your appearance.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Get rid of whatever is causing disharmony at home and be happier in the future. Put your talents to work so that you can be very productive.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Be sure to study a new project well before you put it in operation. Don't take any risks that could prove costly to your reputation.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Make long-range plans that could give you added income in the future. Come to a better understanding with family members.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) You are likely to be upset about matters you can't change, so concentrate on whatever brings you inner peace and allows for greater progress.

points on 4.5%, and is expected to continue to cut the repo rate by nearly 100 basis points over the next twelve months.

In contrast, the Fed is expected to hike the discount rate and federal funds rate by 50 basis points sometime soon, and tighten further by midyear. Fearing a rout in the dollar, there are strong signs that the Clinton administration has resigned itself to the need for tighter monetary policy and a stronger dollar in order to curb potential inflationary pressures. Significantly, the administration also appears to be backing away from its aggressive push for trade concessions from Japan in order to avoid suspicions that it favours an undervalued currency. That should help halt the general erosion of confidence in the dollar that had affected the Deutschmark as well.

With the potential for Germany's discount rate to be cut only one more time this year following the cut on May 11, we have moderated our forecast for the Deutschmark to a 12-month target of DM/U.S.D 1.75.

Technical view: The Deutschmark lost 0.5% against the U.S. dollar last week and dropped an additional 0.7% in early trading this week. Sentiment is neutral. Despite this strength and the fact that the underlying uptrend is mature, there is still some doubt that the currency rally is actually complete. Short term momentum has peaked, but medium term oscillators are still in an uptrend, suggesting that a higher high later in May is still a possibility. First resistance is 1.63-1.64 DM/U.S.\$.

Although short term momentum is peaking, medium term oscillators are bottoming. Thus, the existence of a potential multi-month base pattern, suggests that any further weakness in coming weeks could complete a longer term low and set the stage for an important, intermediate rally.

Pound sterling

Fundamental view: The British pound held steady against the Deutschmark this week and depreciated with the mark against the U.S. dollar, recently trading near DM/GBP 2.49 and U.S./GBP 1.49. The ruling Conservatives performed poorly as expected in last week's local elections. The length of John Major's tenure as prime minister is in doubt. Political uncertainty has been a key factor in keeping the pound near year-to-date lows against the DM.

We believe that U.K. base rates have bottomed, but we think they are unlikely to be raised this year because we foresee no upward pressure on inflation in light of significant spare capacity. March industrial production data were much worse than expected, showing a decline from February levels. Manufacturing production is up by only 1.7% over the past year. A modest uptick in U.K. short-term rates coupled with a series of sizeable German rate cuts should lead the pound up to DM/GBP 2.65 in 12 months.

The pound should also be supported by a substantial yield premium over German bonds. We expect the pound to trade at U.S./GBP 1.52 in 12 months as pound appreciation against the DM is roughly offset by DM depreciation against the dollar.

Technical view: The British pound lost 1.7% versus the U.S. dollar during the week ended May 6, and was the weakest of the six major currencies we most closely monitor. Sentiment is no worse than neutral. The currency is now nicely back into the middle of its multi-month trading range.

Reflecting the intervention of the past week, short term momentum has peaked, implying a move to nearby support at 1.46-1.48 U.S./£, a break below that would allow for at least a test of the 1993 low near \$1.43 and possibly long term support at \$1.40-\$1.42. Resistance exists at \$1.55. The DM cross-rate fell 1.2% last week after making a new 1994 low. Both short and medium term momentum oscillators are weak. Last week's lows at least allows for a challenge of 2.43-2.44. Resistance is at 2.53-2.56.

JUMBLE THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

DRYIT
TINJO
LETEBE
ANSOOL

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Answer here: "O O O O O" OF "O O O O"

(Answers tomorrow)

Yesterday's Jumbles: REARM HOARD DISOWN OUTING
Answer: What were the little cowpokes doing at the coral? THEY WERE HORSIN' AROUND

THE Daily Crossword by Dorothy B. Martin

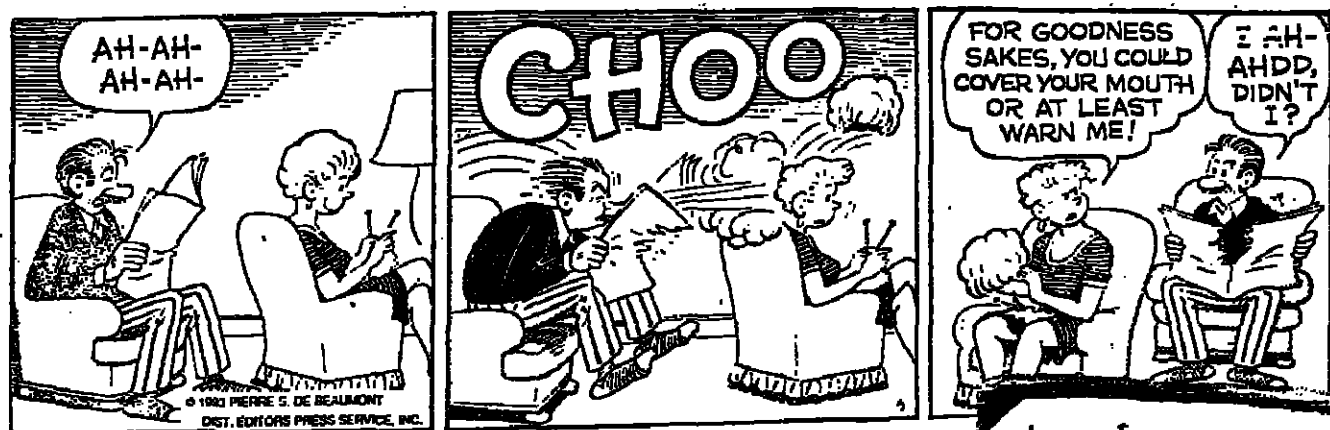
ACROSS
1 Food fish
5 French town
9 Poet Tassadale
13 Ivy plant
14 Spring
15 Wall painting
16 King of the jungle
17 — la Douce
18 Gladiator's place
19 Coach's words?
22 Writing fluids
23 John —
24 Creatures of myth
27 Nora's dog
30 Large collection
34 On the bony
35 Mary's pet
37 Stab
38 Suggestion for Mother's Day?
42 Guido's high note
43 Leak
44 In agreement
45 Egg
47 Western Indians
48 Hangouts
50 Doctrine
52 Neap or ebb
54 Request to make the TV "out"?
58 Wiltow
63 Mata —
64 Lat. abbr.
65 Art style
66 Out of the wins
67 Liberate
68 Wild party
69 Lumber
70 Oxford, a.p.

DOWN
1 On the — (slant)
2 "I cannot tell"
3 Chummy dert
4 Guard
5 Slippery
6 Mother —
7 Reading light
8 Indecisive gem
9 Wave rider
10 Surface
11 Rajah's wife
12 Wingle
13 Minnesota clinic
20 Tact
21 "There is nothing" like —
24 Confirms
25 — of Two
26 Typical
28 Playing marbles
31 A musketeer
32 Facade
33 Rhine
36 Actor Merion
39 Drab person
40 Ignited
41 Pittsburgh
43 Showy clothing
44 H-I
51 Father
53 Like some walls
54 Take-out order words
55 Consumer
56 Fight milieu
57 Malt
58 Ring of light
59 Beehive State
60 Kind of snark
61 Gen. Robt.

Peanuts



Mutt'n'Jeff



كلمة في اليوم

New massacre reported in Rwanda

NAIROBI (R) — At least 88 Rwandan students were massacred in the government-held southern town of Gikongoro and seven other people were killed to death with machetes in the capital Kigali, a United Nations official said Friday.

"We have received reports of the massacre of 88 students yesterday in Gikongoro, a small town close to Butare (in the south of the country)," Abdul Kabia, executive director of the U.N. Assistance Mission in Rwanda (UNAMIR), told Reuters by telephone.

"We do not know the ethnic composition of the victims, but this is an area controlled by government forces," said Mr. Kabia from the embattled capital Kigali, where fighting continued unabated between rebel and government forces Friday.

Most of the estimated 200,000 killed since President Juvénal Habyarimana died in a rocket attack on his plane on April 6 have been from the minority Tutsi tribe, victims of an estimated 100,000 deaths and government army units, witnesses said.

Mr. Kabia said UNAMIR had also received reports that seven people were hacked to death by machete-wielding militia men outside the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) building in Kigali Thursday.

"They were killed by machetes by militia," Mr.

Kabia said. ICRC officials in Nairobi were unable to confirm or deny the incident.

"All this seems to indicate that the massacres continue. We are concerned that when we gain access to more of the country, we will discover more horrible sights, more evidence of killings," Mr. Kabia added.

Mr. Kabia said UNAMIR had repeatedly asked government forces to allow hundreds of mainly Tutsi civilians to be escorted to safety from the Hotel Milles Collines in downtown Kigali, where they have been sheltering with the protection of a handful of U.N. soldiers.

"We have tried it once before and were stopped by the militia. We will not try again until we have the assistance of the government forces," Mr. Kabia said.

Mr. Kabia said heavy fighting between rebels of the Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF) and government forces erupted in Kigali at daybreak Friday and was continuing at noon. The fighting was in the area leading to the airport east of the city.

The official said the fighting was predominantly small arms fire though there were occasional mortar rounds. Despite the fighting, Mr. Kabia was hopeful that U.N. relief flights would be able to land at the airport later Friday.

Belgian Foreign Minister

Willy Claes appealed to the United States Friday to play a more active role in trying to resolve the bloody war in Rwanda.

Mr. Claes said in a radio interview that the United Nations had not succeeded in resolving the Rwandan conflict and France and Belgium, who often spearhead peace initiatives in the region, were not seen as neutral in the ex-Belgian protectorate.

The United States, Mr. Claes said, was in the best position to try to broker a ceasefire between rebels of the Rwanda Patriotic Front and forces of the interim government in Rwanda.

"This is why I have the idea of asking the United States to play a much more active role. I will have a meeting with the U.S. assistant secretary for African affairs, Mr. (George) Moose, with the priority of obtaining a ceasefire," Mr. Claes said, without specifying when or where a meeting would take place.

Mr. Claes said a force of African troops should be sent to Rwanda with the aim of protecting the flood of refugees under threat in areas close to neighbouring Burundi and Tanzania, a proposal also put forward by the United States.

"I think the international community could play a role in financing and arming that (African) force," he said.

The U.N. Security Council reached broad agreement late Thursday to authorise 5,500 troops for Rwanda, but is uncertain how many soldiers are available and where they will be deployed.

The U.S., still bruised after its Somalia mission, objects to a large U.N. contingent moving into the capital Kigali and believes the world body should begin with troops on Rwanda's borders and perhaps move into Kigali when fighting ends.

Belgium, which is reluctant to send any troops to Rwanda, withdrew its 450-member contingent involved in the U.N.'s first mission in Rwanda after 10 Belgian soldiers were killed. Soon after, the U.N. withdrew all but several hundred of the 2,500-strong force.

Mr. Claes said the first U.N. mandate had been too limited, but stressed the world body could only be effective if all of the parties involved in the conflict wanted peace.

"We must not present the United Nations as an institution which can bring about miracles," Mr. Claes said.

He said Belgium had perhaps been naive in its U.N. mission in Rwanda, where arms had been freely available.

"But I prefer to be on the side of naivety than on the side of the assassins who continue to sell arms, which are becoming more and more sophisticated, in big quantities," he said.



Tsutirima Dolma (right), a Tibetan nun, demonstrates the use of an electric torture device allegedly used by the Chinese as Francisca Van Holthe, a human rights activist, looks on during a press conference at Amnesty International in Washington (AFP photo)

China rejects Amnesty accusations

BEIJING (R) — China Friday denied accusations by Amnesty International that it engaged in the widespread torture of dissidents.

"Amnesty International is deeply biased against China," a Foreign Ministry spokesman said. "Its accusations against China are entirely groundless."

In Washington Thursday, the U.S. section of the human rights group said China used thumb screws and electric prods on dissidents.

Displaying what it said were instruments of torture smuggled from the Himalayan region of Tibet, Amnesty urged the Clinton administration to "tell the truth" in the debate over renewing most favoured nation (MFN) trading privileges for China.

"We will not allow China, the United States or the business community to pretend that the human rights situation in China is improving when it is not," William Schurz, executive director of Amnesty International USA, told a news conference.

The Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman said his country was a signatory to conventions against torture "and undertakes the ensuing obligations in real earnest."

Amnesty, winner of the 1977 Nobel Peace Prize, said China had not met President Bill Clinton's demand for "humane treatment" of prisoners. It said China had not ended "the widespread practice of torture and cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment of prisoners."

In extending China's MFN

trade privileges last year, Mr. Clinton told renewal this year to "overall significant" human rights improvements on a range of issues, including treatment of prisoners.

Mr. Clinton must decide by June 3 whether to renew MFN, which lets China's exports into the United States at the lowest tariffs available. U.S. businesses, among others, have been pressing for the extensions, which is opposed by human rights groups.

Meanwhile, Chinese police on alert for any sign of dissent before the anniversary of the Tiananmen Square massacre have arrested two dissidents in Shanghai, family members said Friday.

Police came to the apartment of Yang Zhou, a co-founder of the city's Association for Human Rights, Thursday morning and waited for him to return, his wife said.

They took him away and conducted a three-hour search of the apartment.

Yang Zhou's wife said she believed he was being detained in a police station for investigation but she had been unable to see him.

Family members said another dissident, Yang Qibang, was detained Tuesday but had no further information.

China, fighting to keep its favourable trading status with the United States, announced Friday it had released five more religious dissidents.

"Chen Zhuman, Yan Peizhi, Xu Zhibi, Cui Tai and Zhang Li were ordered to be re-educated through labour respectively between December 1991 and September 1993 because of disturbing social order and endangering public security by making use of religion," Xinhua News Agency said.

Friday's releases came one day after China set free another religious dissident months before her jail term was set to end.

Chinese President Jiang Zemin said five years of prosperity and stability since the 1989 Tiananmen crackdown have proved that the army assault on peaceful Beijing demonstrators was correct.

"A bad thing has been turned into a good thing," Mr. Jiang, who also heads the Communist Party, was quoted in official media Friday as telling Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohammad.

"As a result, our reform and opening programme has forged ahead with steeper, better and even quicker steps, and our advantages have been brought into fuller play," Mr. Jiang told Mr. Mahathir in a meeting Thursday.

Mr. Jiang said history showed that the Communist leadership had no choice on June 3-4, 1989 but to crush the mass protests for political liberties and against corruption and inflation that had paralysed the capital and spread nationwide.

Unknown hundreds of demonstrators died in the dusk-to-dawn military assault, in which members of the People's Liberation Army shot their way through the city into Tiananmen Square, where hundreds of thousands of Chinese students, workers and intellectuals had been venting their anger for six weeks.

Toilet gurus to gather in Hong Kong

HONG KONG (R) — Toilet experts from around the Asia-Pacific rim are to gather in Hong Kong this month to discuss the pungent issue of public lavatories. Presentations by Chinese sanitation experts would include "an inquiry into the culture of toilet," "practical means to eliminate bad smell in public toilets," and even "the history and development of public toilets in Guangzhou," the regional seminar's organisers said Friday. South Korean scholar Kim Seung-Hwan would also weigh in with an "analysis of the citizen's satisfaction on public toilets in Korea," said Hong Kong's Urban Services Department. Japan's contribution would include a relatively sober paper: "The investigation and studies of public toilets in the urban areas," by the Saito Sakamoto Comfort Styling Institute, the department said. The Asia-Pacific seminar on public toilets will begin on May 30 and end on June 1.

Drug runners 'used baby's corpse' — witness

ROME (R) — Drug runners asked a woman to smuggle cocaine in the body of a dead baby, Italian newspapers said Friday. They said the gruesome claim was made in a statement to police by a Moroccan woman due to testify later this month at the trial of seven alleged drugs traffickers in Pescara, on Italy's Adriatic coast. The woman's statement, made in 1989, said she was shown the embalmed corpse of a three-to-four-month-old baby and told it would be filled with 1.5 kilos (three pounds) of cocaine. "The macabre 'container' was to have been closed, dressed and carried in the woman's arms like a sleeping baby to evade police checks," Il Giornale said. It said the woman had been offered five million lire (\$3,000) to carry the corpse from Pescara to another Italian town but had apparently refused and gone to police. Newspapers said her statement was contained in published trial documents.

Thai censorship board approves Schindler's List

BANGKOK (AP) — The police censorship board approved the screening of the acclaimed Holocaust film Schindler's List after having initially objected to a fleeting nude scene. "This film was produced with good intentions so it should be shown in order not to cause distress to moviegoers," said Samer Boonyawan, a board member who voted to approve showing the movie without cuts. The board voted 5-4 in favour of not imposing censorship. Mr. Samer said the film depicted the humanity of one man amid the cruelty of war. The Academy Award-winning epic of a German industrialist's rescue of 1,000 Jews during World War II will premiere in Bangkok on Saturday, a week later than originally scheduled due to the controversy. The censorship board, which customarily deletes entire scenes or smears them with petroleum jelly, at first objected to a scene of about 10 seconds involving Schindler and his mistress. The distributor, United International Pictures, asked the board to reconsider. The distributor is bound by director Steven Spielberg's demand that the film either be shown in its entirety or not at all. Another highly acclaimed film, The Piano, is being shown in Bangkok, although large parts are obscured with petroleum jelly. The censorship board has been widely criticised for being out of touch with reality in Thailand, where prostitutes, hard-core pornographic videos and sex shows are widely available and the Thai edition of the U.S. men's magazine Penthouse made its debut this week.

Thais arrest 4 Russian women for prostitution

BANGKOK (R) — Thai police said Friday they had arrested four young Russian women on prostitution charges. The women, aged from 19 to 24, were arrested by vice squad officers posing as customers. Police said seven packs of condoms found in the women's possession was evidence supporting the charges. The women, who entered Thailand on tourist visas, were facing fines of 5,000 baht (\$200) and deportation, police said. Government officials estimate there are several thousand Russian prostitutes in Thailand. Prostitution, though widespread in Thailand, is illegal.

New S. African cabinet begins to settle in

JOHANNESBURG (R) — South Africa's new "rainbow cabinet" got down to work Friday with ministers preparing to bid for their share of the pot of gold to fund development for millions of impoverished blacks.

Nelson Mandela, who spoke of "a rainbow nation at peace with itself and the world" following his inauguration as the country's first black president Tuesday, was at his desk at the Union Buildings in Pretoria.

"The government is trying to settle in," a spokesman said.

Seven deputy ministers, including Mr. Mandela's estranged wife Winnie whose responsibility is for arts, culture, science and technology, were being sworn in during the day, while new provincial legislatures were presiding their cabinets.

The other ministers and deputy ministers were sworn in Wednesday.

Tokyo Seawale, premier of the new Pretoria-Vereeniging-Witwatersrand-Fredericksburg (FWV) province, the commercial heartland around Johannesburg, announced his cabinet comprising seven members of Mr. Mandela's ANC and three members of the once-dominant National Party.

The national government comprises 18 members from the ANC, which won 62 per cent of the vote in last month's all-race elections, six from the National Party of former President F.W. de Klerk, and three from Mangosuthu Buthe's Zulu-based Inkatha Freedom Party.

ANC Chairman Thabo Mbeki and Mr. de Klerk are deputy presidents. A preoccupation of the new cabinet will be to get the ANC's reconstruction and development programme (RDP) under way, with National Party members — including held-over Finance Minister Derek Keys — closely watching spending.

The ANC projects RDP

spending of 39 billion rand (\$11 billion) over five years funded largely from existing resources. The National Party has estimated the cost at 15 times that.

Housing and Welfare Minister Joe Slovo, who is also chairman of the South African Communist Party, said Thursday night that while there was need for a balanced budget, the allocation for his department was too low.

Housing is a key area in the RDP for improving the lot of blacks deprived of many necessities under apartheid rule. The African National Congress wants a million new housing units over the next five years.

More than a third of the adult workforce — mainly blacks — have no jobs, seven million lack proper homes, and about 16 million of the country's 40 million people live in poverty, or near it.

"The reconstruction programme is... going to be important in the minds of the new government," said Azar Jammine, director and chief economist with the Econometric Business Consultancy.

Mr. Jammine said Mr. Mandela's retention of Mr. Keys as finance minister "ensures continuity and... emphasis on fiscal discipline."

"It also lends a great deal of credibility to the financial policies of the new government and will be seen as far more attractive by foreign investors," he told Reuters.

Joban Louw, chief economist with investment house Sanlam, expected the major ministerial scramble for funds to come with next year's budget.

A fiscal review for 1994 projects a deficit of 6.4 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) and the new government is due to present the actual budget to parliament around June 23.

"The first test for Keys will be to see if he can impose fiscal discipline. It will be interesting to see whether Keys will be able to make them stick to the figures," Mr. Louw said.

More MIA remains found in Vietnam

HANOI (AP) — Investigators seeking clues to the fate of U.S. servicemen missing from the Vietnam War have recovered several sets of human remains, some of them believed to be American, a U.S. military spokesman said Friday.

The current field search has also claimed an American casualty. U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Robert D. Wolfe, 31, of Grand Island, Neb., was killed by a snake as he was digging with his hands at an F105 aircraft crash site in Quang Binh province, 250 miles (400 kilometres) south of Hanoi, said the spokesman, Army Lt. Col. David L. Fredrickson.

Sgt. Wolfe was evacuated for emergency medical care to Bangkok, where he is now recovering. Col. Fredrickson said the snake retreated before team members could determine if it was poisonous. Another investigator was evacuated to Bangkok last September after suffering a snake bite.

The precise number of remains likely to be those of Americans recovering in the current operation will remain unknown until forensic anthropologists review them later this month, Col. Fredrickson said.

Teams of American and Vietnamese specialists excavated some of the remains from helicopter and jet aircraft crash sites in central and northern Vietnam. Local villagers voluntarily turned over others, Col. Fredrickson said.

He said the results so far of the 29th joint field search that began April 21 are "on track" with the previous five missions, each of which yielded between eight and 12 sets of remains believed to be those of Americans.

coordination problems that dogged the 1983 invasion of Grenada, for example.

At the same time, the sources conceded that the exercise could also be an effort to turn up the pressure on Haiti's military junta to allow the return of exiled President Jean-Bertrand Aristide.

During the exercise, Marines used North Carolina and Puerto Rico as mock landing sites, army Rangers landed 10 miles (15 kms) inland, seizing road junctions and knocking out military communications.

Special forces, some of whom landed by submarine, took out mock enemy command posts and radio stations. And Marine fighter jets flew more than 200 practice sorties, sources said.

The Atlantic Command, based in Norfolk, Va., organised the operation. An unidentified spokesman for the command said the target country was a fictitious state run by an "unfriendly leader" who had taken power suddenly.

However, a military source said, the operation, code-named Agile Provider, indicated clearly that the military option was getting a thorough trial run.

The sources said the exercise was aimed at ironing out the

Cambodia seeks military aid from Australia

CANBERRA (R) — Australia is seriously considering a request by Cambodia for arms and training to help it counter the recent surge in Khmer Rouge guerrilla attacks, Foreign Minister Gareth Evans said Friday.

Mr. Evans, a key figure in peace talks which brought democratic elections in Cambodia a year ago, said Australia would consult Thailand before any decision was made.

Last week Thai military

leaders warned against foreign countries providing such military aid.

"Australia, along with a number of countries, has received a request from the Cambodian government for further military assistance, including training and armaments," Mr. Evans said in a statement.

A spokeswoman for Mr. Evans said Cambodia had also appealed to the United States, France and several ASEAN

(Association of South East Asian Nations) countries.

Mr. Evans said such a request was legitimate under the Cambodian peace accords signed in October 1991.

"We are, accordingly, currently giving serious consideration to the Cambodian government's request," Mr. Evans said. "In doing so, we will of course be consulting with, and taking into account the views of other interested countries, including Thailand."

Khun Sa army claims victories in Burma

BANGKOK (R) — Troops of "Golden Triangle" drug warlord Khun Sa captured six military outposts and killed dozens of people in recent battles with government forces in northeastern Burma, a guerrilla spokesman said Friday.

"Reports from the battlefield have said our soldiers overran six Burmese positions and killed dozens," a spokesman for Khun Sa's Mong Tai

Army (MTA) told Reuters by telephone.

There was no immediate confirmation of the claims.

At least five MTA soldiers were killed in heavy fighting Wednesday morning, Khun Sa's spokesman said.

He said six of seven government outposts in the northeastern town of Mong Kyaw were captured during the five-hour pre-dawn attack.

Thousands of troops have battled each other across the banks of the Salween River, running through Burma's northeastern Shan state, since last November after Burmese government soldiers launched an offensive against Khun Sa.

Khun Sa's stronghold is in Ho Mong, a town between the Salween and Shan state's long border with Thailand.

U.S. war games simulate invasion of Haiti — report

BOSTON (Agencies) — The United States just completed a huge military exercise that simulated an invasion of Haiti, the Boston Globe reported Friday.

The two-week exercise involved 44,000 military personnel, including Marines and army special forces, as well as jet fighters, helicopters, amphibious vessels and a submarine, the paper said, citing unidentified military sources.

The newspaper noted that U.S. military exercises in the Caribbean are relatively routine. But unidentified military sources told the Globe that the operation, in its timing and tactics, had been planned with Haiti in mind.

An unidentified White House official told the newspaper on Thursday that the Clinton administration had not yet decided whether force was necessary.

However, a military source said, the operation, code-named Agile Provider, indicated clearly that the military option was getting a thorough trial run.

The sources said the exercise was aimed at ironing out the

man whose area of responsibility includes Haiti, denied that the exercise was staged specifically with Haiti in mind.

The White House strongly denied a Los Angeles Times report earlier this week that the United States was planning a military operation with the aim of "purging" the Haitian military.

Meanwhile, former President George Bush Thursday urged President Bill Clinton to drop support of exiled Haitian President Jean-Bertrand Aristide and opposed the use of U.S. forces to oust the military regime in Haiti.

"I tried to work with Mr. Aristide, and he is not a reliable partner," Mr. Bush said in answer to a question from a Salem State College audience. "He turned on me. He turned on President Clinton."

"The only way is to turn our support for democracy from support of this one man," Mr. Bush said.

He did not elaborate on the statement, nor did he give examples of how he believed Mr. Aristide had turned on either him or President Clinton. Mr.

Aristide, the first democratically elected president of Haiti, was ousted in a bloody military coup in September 1991.

Mr. Bush said he opposes the use of U.S. troops to oust the Haitian military government and urged the administration to work with the Haitian Congress to re-establish democracy in the Caribbean nation.

The former president also chided Mr. Clinton's foreign policy agenda, saying "in the past year we've had a start and stop foreign policy."

Mr. Bush, who lost the 1992 election to Mr. Clinton said the incumbent is not surrounded by advisors equal to his own foreign policy team.

He cited the driving of a U.S. warship from Port-Au-Prince by supporters of the nation's military regime as an example of Mr. Clinton's inadequate foreign policy.

"The president's reputation was on the line, and the signal that went around from that incident, in my view, was devastating as an example of American leadership," Mr. Bush said.

Hata faces first parliamentary crisis

TOKYO (R) — Prime Minister Kiwa Okada's struggling minority government faced its first parliamentary crisis Friday when an opposition party formally demanded it hand back the chair of a key committee.

The Liberal Democracy Party (LDP) submitted a resolution to dismiss the chairman of the Steering Committee, currently a Hata protégé, LDP officials said.

The binding resolution could be put to a vote next week if the LDP can persuade the Diet, a smaller opposition group, to vote along with it.

The Socialists and the allied new party Sabakake hold the swing votes but have yet to make their stance clear.

The issue could come up in Mr. Hata's talks with Socialist Chairman Tomiichi Moriyama, provisionally set for Tuesday.

"The relative strengths of the ruling and opposition camps have changed drastically," the resolution said.

"There is no longer a reason for the post to belong to the ruling side."

The Steering Committee has the power to decide which bills and motions have priority. It could also decide the timing of a no-confidence motion which the LDP plans to use to topple Mr. Hata after the long-delayed state budget becomes law, probably in July.

Current chairman is Kiwa Okada, a member of Mr. Hata's Shinseitō (Renewal Party). The post in question is one of the three most important in parliament, along with the speaker of the lower house and the head of the Budget Committee.

Loss of the post could deal Mr. Hata's coalition a heavy blow, stripping it of control of the parliamentary business schedule.

Mr. Hata's coalition commands the support of only about a third of the 511-member lower house. The LDP and Socialists have pledged to allow the government to survive only until passage of the budget, due to have taken effect on April 1.

The government has already pushed through one stop-gap budget which expires on May 20. Mr. Hata has asked parliament for a second one to cover government spending until the end of June.

Since the Socialists walked out of Hata's coalition late last month, the opposition have bounded him to call an early general election to end the turmoil.

"This government was created by the futile power politics of your Shinseitō," LDP lawmaker Tadamichi Hirai said in a blistering attack on Mr. Hata in parliament Friday.

"It is only a result of irresponsible power games. You should step down and hand back power to the main opposition party."

Mr. Hata said he would refuse to dissolve the lower house for snap elections, since that would be tantamount to nullifying hard-won political reforms which have not yet gone into effect.

U.K. Labour to pick new leader after Smith's death

LONDON (R) — Britain's opposition Labour Party, eager to maintain pressure on beleaguered Prime Minister John Major, hopes to move fast in picking a successor to John Smith, its leader who died of a heart attack Thursday.

A drawn-out Labour leadership campaign, with modernists pitted against traditionalists, could lose the party valuable momentum in the build-up to the 1997 general election and take the spotlight away from Mr. Major's woes.

After grief-stricken colleagues met to review the future leadership of Britain's main opposition party, Chairman David Blunkett said Friday: "The opinion appears to be that we should try and do that by mid-July."

He said the crucial timetable would be decided at a meeting of the party's National Executive Committee on May 25.

Labour is riding high in opinion polls putting it comfortably ahead of Mr. Major's bitterly divided Conservatives.

Mr. Smith was still celebrating Labour's victory in local council elections when he died of a massive heart attack in his London home.

Labour, the Conservatives and the centrist Liberal Democrats called off campaigning for next month's European parliamentary election as a sign of respect for Mr. Smith.

Party elders fear delaying the choice of a successor until the party's annual conference in October would be disastrous.

Neil Kinnock, who stepped down following Labour's fourth consecutive election defeat in 1992 after initiating a modernisation of the party that was continued by Mr. Smith, said of his successor:

"His view would be — without any question — that we should pick up the traces as quickly as possible in order to sustain the momentum that he contributed so greatly to achieving."

The leading contender for the succession is home affairs spokesman Tony Blair.

FIFA urges Japan to grant soccer star Maradona a visa

KUALA LUMPUR (AFP) — FIFA General Secretary Sepp Blatter urged Japan Friday to ease tough anti-drug immigration rules and grant Argentine soccer captain Diego Maradona a visa, describing the convicted drug-user as "a victim not a culprit."

Maradona and his Argentine teammates are set to pull out of the Kirin Cup tournament after Tokyo stuck by its stringent policy of denying visas to individuals like Maradona convicted of narcotics offences.

"It is my personal opinion that it is unfair for a government to continue to punish any person who has been convicted of such an offence but has served his punishment," said Blatter, who is visiting the Asian Football Confederation congress being held in Malaysia.

Maradona was arrested in Buenos Aires April 1991 for cocaine possession and five

months later was given a 14 month suspended sentence by an Italian court on the same charge.

Blatter said neither Japanese nor Argentine soccer officials had raised the controversy with him and the first he heard of it was when a journalist raised the issue at a press conference.

"It does not directly involve FIFA because it is a friendly tournament affair. If they contacted us we would simply offer them this advice," said Blatter.

Blatter also pleaded for a little understanding of Maradona's circumstances, which he said made him more likely to be arrested than anybody else.

"I ask you this, if he were not a footballer would there have been a problem because he most likely would not have been caught?" said Blatter.

Meanwhile in Buenos Aires, a tear-gas canister was left outside the offices of the

Japanese embassy here Friday, a day after Tokyo officials decided to ban Maradona.

No members of the embassy staff were hurt in the attack, but two Argentinians needed attention after inhaling the gas.

The embassy offices are located on the ninth floor of the Rio de la Plata office building.

Leaflets criticising the Japanese decision, written by the self-proclaimed People's Revolutionary Organisation, were found in the surrounding streets.

The justice ministry's immigration bureau, however, granted a visa to Claudio Caniggia, who recently ended a 13-month soccer ban for his alleged use of cocaine. Caniggia would have been allowed to go to Japan because he had not faced criminal charges.

Argentina had planned to play Japan and France later this month in the Kirin Cup as part of their World Cup build-up.

Bin Sulayem wins 12th Jordan Rally

By Aileen Bannayan
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Six-time Middle East rally champion Mohammad Bin Sulayem of the United Arab Emirates and co-driver Phillip Mills drove their Ford Escort RS Cosworth to victory Friday in the 12th Jordan International Rally organised by the Royal Automobile Club of Jordan (RACJ).

According to provisional results issued by the rally press office Bin Sulayem clinched his fifth Jordan Rally and 29th international rally win with a time of 3 hours 24 minutes 5 seconds.

His compatriot Khalifa Al Mutairi and co-driver Dave Nicholson in a Toyota Celica GT 4 came in second with a time of 3 hours 30 minutes 22 seconds, followed by Saudi Arabia's Abdullah Bakhshab and co-driver Bobby Willis in another Toyota Celica GT 4 in third place with a time of 3 hours 39 minutes 5 seconds.

Jordan's Bashar Bustami and co-driver Malek Hariri finished fourth in a Ford Sierra Cosworth with a time of 3 hours 52 minutes 26 seconds.

Saudi Arabia's Ahmad Al Sabbah and co-driver Tom Steele in a Ford Escort RS Cosworth came in fifth.

The Lebanese women team of Hanady Salloum and co-driver Rita Za'our finished the gruelling 981-kilometre rally and won the ladies cup in their Peugeot 309 GTI.

In a post-rally press conference Bin Sulayem stressed that he was now concentrating on the world championship but added that he had taken part in the Jordan Rally because it was his favourite.

"It was here exactly 10 years ago when I won first international rally," he told a cheering crowd of fans and reporters.

The rally star was loudly cheered when it was revealed that he had opted a delay during Thursday's first leg to transport clerk of the course Ziad Louza to hospital after a serious accident.

Bin Sulayem took the lead in the two-day 981-kilometre rally — the second round of the Middle East Rally Championship — in the 13th special stage of the event following the rally's most astonishing upset when current Middle East rally champion leader and overnight night leader Sheikh Suhail Bin Khalifa Al Maktoum of the UAE in a Toyota Celica GT 4 retired due to mechanical failure four kilometres into Friday's first special stage after competitors set off at 9.30 a.m. from the Forte Grand Hotel in Amman heading southwards for a gruelling 641-kilometre drive encompassing 300 kilometres of 11 desert stages.

The day's other big upset was Dutch Coen Vink's retirement due to engine overheating in special stage 16 at Hasa after maintaining a top three place throughout most of the stages.

Cyprus' Andreas Tsoulfas had maintained fourth place before dropping out in the final two stages.

The top four competitors had maintained a top 10 lead throughout the rally. However, they nearly secured their standings following the 14th special stage.

After SS18 at Beidha was

declared a road section, 25 cars — including the rally's two women's teams — trekked the rough desert return route after the restart from Petra regrouping for the last five stages of the rally — known as the best, yet probably the toughest, of the Middle East rallies which include Dubai, Qatar, Lebanon and Oman.

Some 32 competitors made Friday's restart of the second leg three competitors — Jordan's Ahmad and Mohammad Daoud and Ireland's Richie Hoffeld — did not start the rally Friday, while three others had retired in the first leg.

Hoffeld was excluded from the rally after a spot check revealed that wheel, rim and tire sizes were illegal.

The UAE's Rashid Bin Ghurab was one of the first casualties of Friday's desert stages. He dropped out of the rally at the 22 kilometre-long Special Stage 13 at Tunaib.

After Al Maktoum's retirement, the Arab world's most famous rally driver Bin Sulayem took the overall lead followed by Vink and Cypriot Andreas Tsoulfas.

Bustami was 6th, Mahmoud Komok 12th, Marouf Abu Samra 13th.

The rally's youngest competitor, Jane Gunningham, 19, who had finished 10th in the Qatar Rally last month, was in 19th place followed by the other Lebanese ladies team.

At SS14, the second longest stage at Swaga, Vink dropped to fifth place, Mutaywi was second fastest behind Bin Sulayem and took third overall place behind Tsoulfas.

Bustami remained sixth, Graham Middleton with Jordanian co-driver Faisal Sa'doun was 10th, Tareq Tab'a 18th and Salloum 19th.

Two Jordanian drivers, Ammar Hijazi and Asem Aref, retired due to mechanical problems.

At SS 15, Hafira, the longest stage at 38.22 kilometres, Bin Sulayem and Mutaywi were the fastest with an average speed of 118 kilometres an hour.

Jordan's Tareq Tab'a dropped out of the competition, while Tsoulfas came third, Bakhshab fourth, Bustami took fifth place after Vink dropped to sixth, Belgium's Nicholas Dun was 7th, Saudi Arabia's promising new star Ahmad Al Sabbah 8th, followed by Belgium's Jos Boon and Middleton, Lebanon's George Khoury was 13th and Salloum 19th.

At stage 16 at Hasa, Bin Sulayem maintained first overall place though finishing a slow 15th when he reported the turbo failing. Mutaywi clocked the fastest time at 14m 10s to maintain second place while Bakhshab came third and Kuwait's Lester Featherstonehough dropped out of the rally.

Bustami was fifth, Middleton 9th, Abu Samra 10th, Gunningham 18th and Salloum 19th.

There were no major changes at Fujjiz SS17.

Before the Petra regroup Tsoulfas had a puncture, while Sabbah had to use a fire extinguisher to put out the flames when a tyre was punctured and the rubber caught fire.

During the first day asphalt

stages of the rally, Al Maktoum with co-driver Khaled Malek had established a first place tough, slim lead with a time of 52 minutes 34 seconds over Bin Sulayem and Vink finishing fastest in 7 of the nine stages.

Bin Sulayem and co-driver Mills followed closely in second place with a time of 54 minutes 17 seconds. While Vink and co-driver Van Goor trailed in third place with a time of 56 minutes 11 seconds.

A total of 38 out of an original 46 registered entrants started the two-day rally — the most prestigious of the Kingdom's sporting events.

Amman Mayor Mamduh Abbadi deputised for His Royal Highness Prince Faisal in flagging away the cars from the majestic Roman Amphitheatre in downtown Amman Thursday afternoon.

Driving at an average speed of 111 kilometres an hour England's Pablo Raboult took the lead in the 11.6 kilometre long first Special Stage at Marsa, followed by Al Maktoum, Vink, and Bin Sulayem.

The rally's first retirement was Belgian Freddie Loix who had to pull out after mechanics failed to repair the broken gearbox of his Opel Astra GSi after the first stage.

The UAE's Peter Cherry and Stuart Fleming in a Mitsubishi Gallant VR4 lost 4 minutes at the stage with mechanical problems, while Hoffeld broke a driveshaft between SS1 and SS2.

Al Maktoum was fastest in the second stage at Masara with a time of 6 minutes 11 seconds. Bin Sulayem was second fastest at 6m 28s while Mutaywi clocked 6.40.

The rally's most unusual car no. 32, Featherstonehough's a Volvo 242 GT also lost three minutes with mechanical problems.

Al Maktoum, Bin Sulayem and Vink were the top three at SS4, the River Stage, where England's Middleton and Jordanian co-driver Sa'doun dropped 5 minutes and fell from 12th to 25th place.

Meanwhile Raybould's MG Maestro had mechanical problems and he became the first British retirement after a number of delays and a broken windscreens at SS4 at Ras Al Aqra.

Tsoulfas in his Lancia Delta Integrals was third fastest behind Hoffeld and Bin Sulayem, but overall positions remained unchanged.

Bustami was 8th, group N leader Bakhshab 9th, Ahmad Al Sabbah 20th, Gunningham 23rd, Salloum 25th, Tab'a 30th.

At the fifth special at Sakina, Bin Sulayem came second behind Al Maktoum and was reported to be continuing the rally after his co-driver Mills was described to be severely sick and under medical surveillance after no eating for three days.

The stage's other fastest times were Vink and Mutaywi third and fourth, Bustami 8th, Ma'rouf Abu Samra 6th, Hoffeld 7th, Tsoulfas 9th, Bakhshab 9th, and Bin Ghurab 10th.

Meanwhile news from Jerash regroup reported that Tsoulfas had damaged a track rod on his Lancia and could not replace it as his

spare was still in Syria.

At the river, the shortest special stage at 4.96 kilometres, top three places remained unchanged.

The top Jordanian drivers were Bustami 6th, Abu Samra 7th, Komok 12th, Ahmad Daoud 14th, Mohammad Daoud 18th.

Gunningham was 20th, Salloum 21st, Hoffeld 32nd, Featherstonehough 33rd.

At SS8 at Ras Al Aqra, Al Maktoum was 12 seconds faster than four-time Jordan Rally champion Sulayem who was again followed by Vink in a

Subaru Legacy RS 4x4.

With two stages remaining on the way back to rally headquarters at the Forte Grand in Amman, top three places again remained unchanged at SS 11 at Marsa' with Middleton and Sa'doun jumping from 24th to 17th. Ron Oakley was 19th, Tab'a 21st and Hoffeld 22nd.

Hoffeld was fourth fastest at SS12 at Rumeimeen thus maintaining 24th place after dropping to 32nd at SS7.

Top ten places after the first leg were: Maktoum, Sulayem, Vink, Tsoulfas, Bakhshab, Bustami, Amin, Mutaywi.



Jordan International Rally champion Mohammad Bin Sulayem

Stone-throwers prompt RACJ to cancel 3 stages

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Despite the months of preparation, split-second timing and organisation, the 12th Jordan International Rally was not void of problems and obstacles that caused headaches to organisers and competitors alike.

Months before the event started, the organisers, the Royal Automobile Club of Jordan (RACJ), had apprehensions about trouble-making "fans" who sometimes caused damage to competitors' cars by throwing rocks or blocking roads.

The usual troublesport was in the north of the Kingdom near Soof Camp.

This year, RACJ officials tried to involve people in the area to have a positive rather than a negative impact on the event which they hope will attain a supreme level of organisation entitling it to become one of the world championship events.

However, the same old problem again surfaced during the first leg of the event Thursday, when rally officials had to cancel three special stages at Kufir Khal and Sakina.

Many cars were reported to have broken windscreens and dents, including the Ford Escort RS Cosworth driven by Saudi Arabia's Ahmad Al Sabbah, the Toyota Celica GT 4 of the UK's Graham Middleton, Simon Nutter's Peugeot 205 and the Aleko 2141S of Jordan's Tareq Tab'a.

Kuwait's Lester Featherstonehough said: "We had stones thrown at us on every stage in the first leg. There are bumps on the car, but no serious damage, we're lucky."

While acknowledging that unexpected troublesome incidents occur in all sports, many competitors said they hoped such incidents be eliminated from the Jordan Rally which seems to be a favourite for most competitors.

Six-time Middle East champion and the record holder of five Jordan Rally wins Mohammad Bin Sulayem said it was obvious that people in the troublesome did not approve of the rally in their area and hence that region should be in the future.

At a meeting of rally stewards Friday morning, RACJ Director Derek Ledger said three stages were cancelled in the interest of competitors' safety.

Also Friday, the Gulf Oil Ford team issued a press release after one of their entries, Ireland's Richie Hoffeld was excluded from the rally on the second day because of oversteering on his Ford Escort RS Cosworth.

"The Gulf Oil Team was given the right to appeal, but declined to protest against a series of first leg incidents in which rocks were hurled from the roadsides."

"We were forced to use group N tyres because all our group A tyres were delayed in customs for four days and we couldn't get them out in time," said team manager Alistair Roberts.

Jazz overcomes Nuggets; Atlanta smothers Indiana

SALT LAKE CITY, Utah (R) — Karl Malone took over the game in the second half and led the Utah Jazz to a 104-94 victory over the Denver Nuggets and a two games to none lead in their Western Conference semifinal series Thursday.

In the night's other game, the Atlanta Hawks smothered Indiana 92-69, holding the Pacers to an NBA playoff record low points total to even their Eastern Conference semis at 1-1.

Malone, who did not score in the first quarter, finished with 32 points and keyed Utah's decisive stretch run. Teammate David Benoit said that's just what Malone had promised.

In Atlanta, Kevin Willis had 20 points and 15 rebounds and Mookie Blaylock collected the first triple-double of this year's NBA playoffs as the Hawks held the Pacers to the fewest points in a playoff game, 69.

The previous playoff record for fewest points was 70, set by Golden State in 1973 and matched by Seattle in 1982.

The best-of-seven series shifts to Indiana for games three and four Saturday and Sunday.

The loss was the first in five playoff games for Indiana, which swept its opening-round series against Orlando. The Pacers also had won their final eight regular-season games.

AFC delegates reject Japan candidate

KUALA LUMPUR (AFP) — Delegates at the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) congress dealt a humiliating blow to Japan's high-profile 2002 World Cup bid Friday, when they rejected the country's top official Tadao Murata in two high-profile elections.

Murata, secretary general of Japan's 2002 bidding committee, polled only two out of 32 votes in the bitter battle for FIFA's vice-presidency which was won by his arch-rival South Korean Chung Moon-jung with 11 votes.

Murata, who used English soccer legend Bobby Charlton and free bottles of 12-year-old malt whisky as campaign tools, was further stunned when he again came last in polling for his old seat as one of the AFC's four vice-presidents.

"I learned a lot of things today," said Murata after a roller-coaster day of elections which saw only one incumbent AFC official out of six secure re-election.

Murata's defeat means Japan, one of Asia's soccer powerhouses after the launch of the popular J-League last year, has no senior official in the AFC for the first time since Murata first became AFC vice-president in 1964.

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Stich out of Becker match

ROME (AFP) — Boris Becker earned a free ride into the Italian Open semi-finals here Friday, when fellow German Michael Stich pulled out before their quarter-final with back pain.

Stich, the world number two, had complained of "a cold in the back" after Thursday's third-round victory over Moroccan surprise qualifier, Karim Alami.

On Friday, a report from tournament doctors said Stich was suffering from "pain in the

lower lumbar region and in both legs; with consequent loss of muscle strength." They prescribed muscle relaxants and pain killers.

Becker and Stich have only met on clay once, two years ago in the semi-finals at Hamburg, when Stich thrashed his compatriot 6-1, 6-1.

The semi-final was Becker's top career showing on clay, his least favourite surface, although the three-times Wimbledon champion still has an all-surface career record of 5-3 over Stich.

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF & TAMARA HIRSCH
1991 Thomas Hulse Services Inc.

KILL OR BE KILLED

Both vulnerable, North deals.

NORTH
♠ 10 7 5 3 2
♥ A 9 5
♦ 7
♣ 8

EAST
♠ J 6 2
♥ 9 6
♦ K 10 7 3
♣ A Q 6 3

SOUTH
♠ A K 10 9 5 3
♥ K
♦ Q 8
♣ J 5 4

The bidding: North East South West
1 NT Pass 1 ♠ Pass
4 ♠ Pass 4 ♠ Pass
Opening lead: Ten of ♠

If you recognize the problem, it is usually easy to find the remedy. Sometimes, however, there's a red herring out there and it's not easy to differentiate between the real and the illusory.

At both tables the contract was four spades, reached on similar auctions. Note that North had no compunction in suppressing a six-card major suit — an eight-card fit had already been located.

This hand was dealt during the

Wendlinger stable following crash

MONTE CARLO (R) — Austrian driver Karl Wendlinger remained on the critical list Friday but his condition was described as stable by a leading member of his team.

Mercedes Benz motor sport chief Norbert Haug, engine suppliers to Wendlinger's Sauber team, said the driver remained in a deep coma following his Monaco Grand Prix practice crash Thursday, but added: "We have good reason to believe he will be okay."

Wendlinger suffered very serious head injuries when his car slammed into barriers on the famous street circuit.

Haug said the team have withdrawn from the Monaco meeting, glamour event of the World Championship calendar, because they felt emotionally depressed by the accident and were unable to concentrate on their jobs.

In a formal statement, Sauber said they had decided to discontinue participation both from practice and race "out of respect for its seriously injured driver Karl Wendlinger."

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Lebanon's crisis seen coming to end

BEIRUT (R) — Prime Minister Rafik Al Hariri was expected to return to work soon, ending a six-day strike that has plunged Lebanon into its worst political crisis in nearly two years, official sources said on Friday.

Several sources said Mr. Hariri would go back to work on the understanding that his demands for government changes and a thorough discussion of relations with President Elias Hrawi and House Speaker Nabih Berri would be closely looked into.

"The crisis is over, the last details of the compromise are being discussed," a source said. "The prime minister will resume his work soon and after that all the controversial files will be put on the table and calmly discussed."

The crisis erupted when Mr. Hrawi and Mr. Berri blocked Mr. Hariri's attempt to appoint four new ministers to his 30-man cabinet to strengthen Christian representation, and to reshuffle other portfolios to improve the government's effectiveness.

They demanded a full change of government instead, apparently to reduce Mr. Hariri's support in the cabinet. Mr. Hariri cancelled all his appointments and stayed at home from Sunday in a bid to force his two rivals to accept his proposal.

A source close to Mr. Hariri said his likely decision to return to work was a way out of the crisis rather than a solution but he was confident it would end soon.

He said the billionaire prime minister provoked the crisis in order to sound the alarm that there was a crisis of the political system, not just the government.

"The crisis is not a government crisis, it is a crisis of the regime," the source said. "Settlement of the issues raised by Hariri's action has been post-

poned but they will not be shelved."

He said the main issue was the lack of clear definition of the powers of the president, the prime minister and the speaker which tended to cause political deadlocks between them.

"Ending his (Hariri's) withdrawal from activity, which was meant to give a shock, is only the start of tackling the problems of the regime," the source said.

He said a cabinet reshuffle was essential to improve the government's political cohesion and performance and its efficiency in implementing postwar reconstruction plans.

He said an agreement on a clear separation of the powers of the president, prime minister and speaker had to be reached.

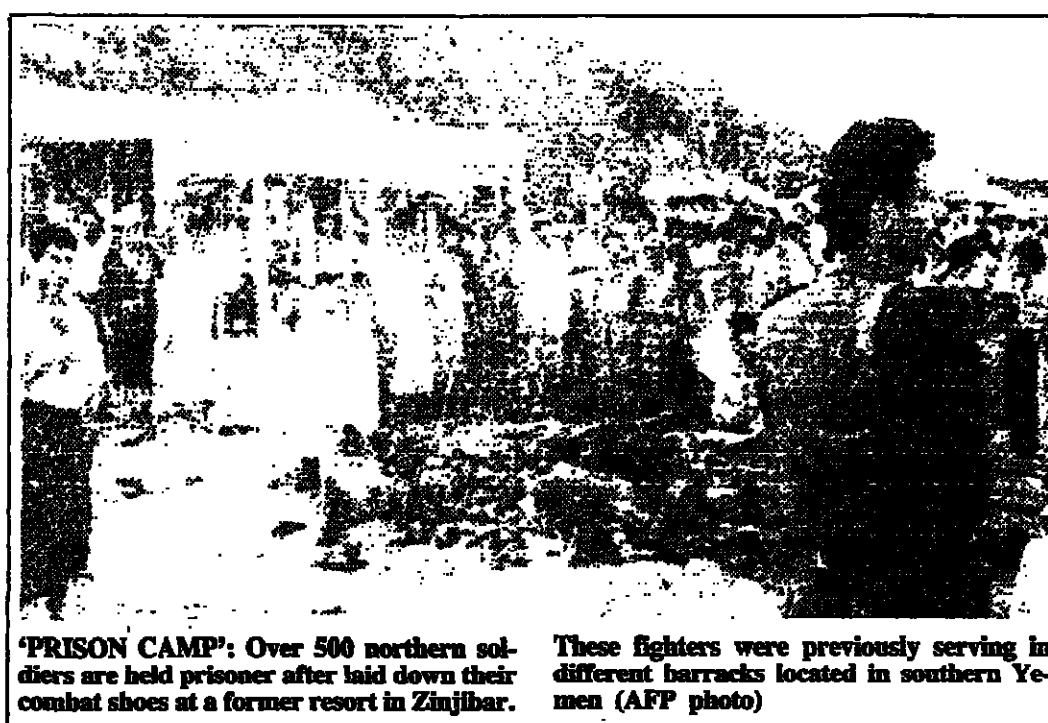
Pressure on the Lebanese pound on the Beirut foreign exchange market waned considerably as the crisis eased. Dealers said the central bank sold about \$15 million to meet the falling demand for the U.S. currency.

The bank sold more than \$150 million in the previous four days to hold the Lebanese pound stable at 1,689.5, they said.

The sources said Mr. Hariri appeared to have decided to back down from his demand for an immediate political settlement after Syrian officials failed to intervene directly to resolve the crisis.

Damascus, which has 35,000 troops stationed across two-thirds of Lebanon, has in the past mediated between the three leaders.

But political sources said this time they were disturbed by the timing of the crisis on the eve of a visit to Damascus, and possibly Beirut, by U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher in a drive to push forward peace talks with Israel.



'PRISON CAMP': Over 500 northern soldiers are held prisoner after laid down their combat shoes at a former resort in Zinjibar.

These fighters were previously serving in different barracks located in southern Yemen (AFP photo)

Jordan ready to give humanitarian aid to Yemen but no mediation

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — His Majesty King Hussein has reiterated Jordan's readiness to provide humanitarian assistance to Yemen but said the Kingdom would not interfere in the internal affairs of the war-torn Arab peninsula country.

During a meeting with Yemeni Foreign Minister Mohammad Salem Bassandwa, who paid a brief visit to the Kingdom Thursday, the King expressed concern with maintaining the unity of Yemen and ending the bloodshed between forces loyal to South Yemeni leader Ali Salem Al Beidh and Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh.

Mr. Bassandwa, who is on a tour of Arab countries to inform them of the developments in the Yemeni conflict, left Jordan for Damascus after delivering to King Hussein a verbal message from Mr. Saleh.

In an arrival statement car-

ried by the Jordan News Agency, Petra, Mr. Bassandwa praised the role Jordan played in trying to mediate the crisis between former socialist South Yemen and the Conservative North before the political crisis there erupted into full-fledged civil war earlier this month.

"Jordan entered the Yemeni history" when in February it hosted the signing of a reconciliation agreement between Mr. Saleh and Mr. Beidh, said Mr. Bassandwa.

He also thanked the Kingdom for treating some of the wounded in the war, which has claimed thousands of casualties since it started 11 days ago. Jordan has also sent a medical team to help treat war victims.

After the war erupted, North Yemen rejected any foreign mediation effort, insisting on a military settlement of the conflict. But indicated it would accept a negotiated settlement to the crisis after it had become clear that it will not be able to achieve a military victory.

An Arab League delegation was on its way to Sanaa in a bid to end the conflict but Mr. Bassandwa said the league did not offer mediation. Its delegation would only "review developments in the situation in Yemen," he said.

Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali has said that Jordan would not mediate in the conflict unless both parties to it agree on the Kingdom's role, adding that Jordan would not "interfere in support of either parties to the crisis."

Dr. Majali said King Hussein had telephoned both Mr. Beidh and Mr. Saleh in a bid to end the fighting but North Yemen sees any foreign intervention as meddling in its internal affairs.

Jordan has evacuated over 750 Jordanians from Yemen on board military aircraft, and Royal Jordanian (RJ) airliners. RJ has halted its flights to the country, which observers say would be dragged into a protracted civil war unless a negotiated settlement is found.

Bosnians fight as they watch new peace bid

SARAJEVO (R) — Bosnia's factions kept up low-level sniping and shelling as a new international peace bid got under way on Friday amid an indication the Serbs were digging in their heels on yielding much land.

Foreign ministers of Western powers and Russia opened a day of talks in Geneva in an attempt to breathe new life into the flagging peace process.

But the signs for early progress were not hopeful. Bosnian Serbs and their Muslim and Croat foes in the former Yugoslav republic seemed in no mood to conciliate over the crucial issue of who gets how much land in a Bosnia at peace.

Muslims and Croats agreed that their new federation, born in a deal brokered by the United States, should encompass 58 per cent of Bosnia although they now control only 30 per cent while the Serbs have won 70 per cent in 25 months of war.

"I cannot see where the Muslims and Croats got the idea that they are entitled to so much territory," Bosnian Serb Parliament Speaker Momcilo Krajisnik said. "They simply cannot lay claim to it — they are neither military nor moral victors."

"Whatever is over 50 per cent of the territory — regardless of quality — is out of the question," the Yugoslav news agency Tanjug quoted him as saying late on Thursday.

The Serbs had at one point agreed to roll back to 49 per cent but tore up this concession when talks with their foes broke down in February.

Both sides in Bosnia reported small-scale shooting and shelling on Friday in various spots along the battle lines but no major attacks.

A Malaysian U.N. military observer was killed and another Egyptian observer wounded on Thursday when they came under fire near Sarajevo, the U.N. said.

Ministers meeting at the U.S. mission in Geneva to try to forge a common Bosnia policy were expected to call for a ceasefire and new negotiations between the Bosnian Serbs, Muslims and Croats.

The meeting grouped ministers from the United States, Russia and five European Union countries — Britain, France, Germany, Greece and Belgium.

The session was due to hear a report from a five-nation "contact group" of senior officials on its efforts to persuade the Bosnian factions to resume peace talks that broke down in February over conflicting territorial claims.

Outside powers have been divided over the best tactics to adopt. France this week threatened to withdraw its 6,000-strong U.N. peacekeeping contingent in former Yugoslavia if no serious effort was made to resolve the conflict.

France has called for a six-month ceasefire and an independent Bosnia in which Muslims, Serbs and Croats would be joined loosely in a confederal state.

U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Ghali has called for a general ceasefire of fixed duration.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Ben Sulayem wins Jordan Rally

AMMAN (J.T.) — Mohammad Ben Sulayem of the United Arab Emirates Friday won the 1994 Jordan International Rally. Sulayem, who won the title for the fifth time, was put on the course of his 29th win of his career when his compatriot Sheikh Ben Khalifah Al Maktoum, who led the rally throughout the first leg, had a mechanical failure early Friday. Khalifah Al Mota'wi of the United Arab Emirates took the second place, followed by Saudi Arabia's Abdullah Bakhashash. Jordan's Bashir Bustami and co-driver Malek Hariri finished fourth (see page 9).

Sharif appeals for end to Bosnia embargo

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Chairman of a conference of the International Parliament Against Genocide in Bosnia and Herzegovina held recently in Brussels, Kamel Al Sharif, on Friday called on U.S. President Bill Clinton and leader of the Republican bloc in the U.S. Congress Bob Dole to lift the embargo on arms to Bosnia-Herzegovina to help the country defend itself. In cables to President Clinton and Mr. Dole on the occasion of the debate currently taking place by the U.S. congress of lifting the arms ban on Bosnia and Herzegovina, Dr. Sharif said the U.S. Congress "position is a step on the right track and will help improve the reputation of the U.S. and lay down the foundation of a balanced policy capable of serving international peace and peaceful coexistence among followers of the monotheistic faiths and beliefs. Dr. Sharif said. The American congress step will prevent a religious war in the world, avoiding the world a global catastrophe. Mr. Sharif said, voicing hope that the U.S. president will pass a bill lifting the ban on arms to Bosnia and Herzegovina. He stressed that the United States shoulders a special responsibility for leading the world towards the shore of peace.

Singapore premier visits Petra

MAAN (Petra) — Singapore Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew and an accompanying delegation on Friday visited the ancient city of Petra. Mr. Yew arrived in Amman Thursday from the occupied territories heading a large delegation on a four-day official visit to Jordan. Mr. Yew will hold talks with Jordanian officials on bilateral relations.

Syrian delegation arrives today

AMMAN (Petra) — A Syrian delegation headed by Minister of Economy and External Trade Mohammad Al Inadi arrives here Saturday to take part in a meeting of the Joint Jordanian-Syrian Ministerial Committee meetings. The committee will discuss economic issues of mutual concern for Jordan and Syria. The Syrian delegation includes Minister of Industry Ahmad Nizamuddin, Central Bank Governor Mohammad Al Sharif and other senior officials.



Clintons attend Streisand concert

WASHINGTON (R) — President Bill Clinton and his wife Hillary attended a concert by singer Barbra Streisand and the entertainer mixed in a little politics throughout her performance of old favorites. "How many of you are Democrats?" she asked to lukewarm applause by the sold-out crowd at the Usar Arena in nearby Landover, Md., which included members of the president's cabinet and Congress. "And how many of you are Republicans?" she followed, this time to thunderous clapping. "Well, I distinctly wanted this to be a non-partisan night," she joked. Streisand, a noted friend of the Clintons who also performed at the president's inaugural concert, captured the audience as she sang hits that stretched from her very first album in 1962 to her most recent one. Streisand, with the help of eight teleprompters scrolling the lyrics, crooned through old hits like Happy Days Are Here Again, complete with a video screen that flashed pictures of Clinton, south African President Nelson Mandela and Russian President Boris Yeltsin. The Clintons applauded throughout the two-hour show, and the first couple were visibly moved when Streisand sang one of their personal favorites, Evergreen. That song title is also Hillary Clinton's Secret Service code name. Streisand paused early in the show to attack the media for her relationship with the president, who has often been criticised for his cosy relationship with Hollywood. Streisand used the time when she spent a night at the White House as an example of media overkill. "I was a little afraid of the big deal the press made when I was a guest of the president's," she said. "I've been criticised by the press for 30 years and guess what? I'm still here," she added to loud applause.

Gannes Film Festival begins

CANNES, France (R) — Hollywood's enfant terrible, the Coen Brothers, opened the Cannes Film Festival with a vicious satire on American capitalism — but denied they were after another top Golden Palm Award. The Hudsucker Proxy by Joel and Ethan Coen and starring Paul Newman, Tim Robbins and Jennifer Jason Leigh drew applause from critics. Set in the 1950s, it is a comic fantasy on the American dream. When a tycoon throws himself from a Manhattan skyscraper, the company board picks a green country bumpkin in the hope he will drive share prices down so they can buy it back. But he invents the hula hoop and becomes a folk hero. For the Coen brothers, opening the festival was a welcome honour. Their last film Barton Fink, on the agonies of a Hollywood scriptwriter, was relegated to a midnight showing in 1991. But it won an unprecedented three awards including the Golden Palm — much to the anger of French critics who demanded a rules change. True to the Coens' subversive streak, their latest Cannes offering is a free-wheeling fable inspired by the works of Hollywood legends Frank Capra and Howard Hawks. Their witty, biting satire has Newman as an evil cigar-chomping magnate who seeks to manipulate the country yoke played by Tim Robbins, of Bob Roberts and Short Cuts fame.

Judge blocks auction of Marilyn Monroe documents

LOS ANGELES (R) — A judge Thursday blocked an auction of documents that belonged to Marilyn Monroe, including a letter from Robert Kennedy's sister that appeared to support rumours of a close relationship between Kennedy and the late movie star. A Los Angeles Superior Court judge issued a temporary restraining order after Monroe's estate filed suit, seeking to prevent the auction of more than 60 items that belonged to the actress, said Irving Seidman, a lawyer for Monroe's estate. The items that would have been sold Saturday at the Odyssey Gallery in Hollywood include her personal address book and a previously unpublished letter to her psychiatrist that reportedly shows attempted suicide before her eventual death from a drug overdose in 1962.

Arafat's cabinet holds a few surprises

(Continued from page 1)

Mr. Arafat himself was underlined by the three key leaders' negative comments about the agreement, and instead had challenged them to either join him to shoulder the responsibility or confine themselves to the role of disgruntled observers.

"Arafat has been calling each nominee, especially the ones who oppose the Cairo agreement, and urging them not to abandon him at this critical stage," one PLO official said.

According to different accounts, the master tactician has been effectively challenging his critics to join him to face the task of building a Palestinian state instead of taking "the easy way out."

Israeli threats to delay the entry of Palestinian police if a Palestinian authority was not declared and the enormous shift of the mood in the occupied territories in favour of the agreement have contributed to mellowing the initially vehement opposition to the provisions of the deal.

Mr. Hussein, however, is said to have asked for assurances that his authority as leader of Fateh in the West Bank should not continue to be marginalised and bypassed by Mr. Arafat, who has been using other channels to convey orders and instructions to the organisation.

Furthermore, the position of Mr. Hussein and Dr. Ereikat is to a large extent reflective of the stand of the Fateh organisation in the West Bank, that insists on being represented in the Palestinian authority.

According to information available from the West Bank, some influential Fateh rank and file, including young deportees who were allowed to return last month had urged Mr. Hussein and Dr. Ereikat to accept.

Information available from Tunis and the occupied territories also suggest that many Fateh leaders feared that by boycotting the authority, the rival leadership will be confined to "traditional personalities" that have already accepted Mr. Arafat's offer dealing a blow to Fateh.

Faced with reluctance by the historic leaders of the pro-PLO groups in the occupied territories, Mr. Arafat went straight to more traditional and conservative figures, sending alarms among the Fateh rank and file.

According to well-placed officials, Fateh officials strongly protested Mr. Arafat's attempt to appoint Jamil Tarif, head of the Palestinian liaison committee with Israel, but who is not seen as part of

the more militant leadership that secured and sustained support for the PLO over the years.

As names of members of the Palestinian authorities were starting to leak, many feared that it will be a weak body that would further consolidate Mr. Arafat's domination and will not challenge further concession to the Israelis.

Yet, it remains to be seen how Mr. Hussein, Dr. Ereikat and Dr. Ashrawi will reconcile between their misgivings about the agreement and being members of the body entrusted with implementing it. Well-informed Palestinian sources said that the three feel that they could influence the continuing process of negotiations, instead of leaving it to Mr. Arafat and a small circle of aides in the hope that future steps will pave the way for Palestinian sovereignty.

Other PLO officials were very critical of what they viewed as the contradictory position of the three leaders, who confined themselves to verbal protest but "towed the line" in the end.

Opposition officials, however, declined from attacking any of the personalities who accepted to join. It was a sign that even the opposition hopes that the presence of outspoken critical members in the authority will pressure Mr. Arafat to yield some authority and not to block elections as many fear he would.

So far the Palestinian authority is basically a coalition of Fateh and independents. The major other group is the Palestinian Democratic Union, FIDA, led by Yasser Abed Rabbo. It was still unclear whether Mr. Abed Rabbo himself will join or confine FIDA's representation to personalities from the occupied territories.

Azmi Shoaibi, FIDA's leader in the West Bank, was already included in the authority and FIDA officials Sami al Kilani and Zahira Kamal are strong nominees. If Ms. Kamal is appointed, the Palestinian authority will include three women.

FIDA has publicly condemned the Cairo agreement but nevertheless decided to join the authority.

The Palestine People's Party (PPP), which has boycotted the last rounds of negotiations, has maintained its stand of refusing to be part of the authority.

Agencies add: PLO difficulties in naming a full slate of 24 member for the Palestinian National Authority has become the latest snag in the much-delayed self-rule plan

agreed last September.

The list so far includes Mr. Arafat, PLO Executive Committee members Samir Ghosheh and Yasser Amr, chief economist Ahmad Qouria, two deportees and many of the prominent Palestinians who have taken part in peace talks with Israel since 1991, PLO negotiator Nabil Shaath said.

Asked if all the nominees had agreed, he said: "None of these names is nominated without being fully negotiated first."

The PLO executive committee had approved all of them, Dr. Shaath added at a news conference in Cairo. Dr. Shaath transmitted the list to Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin on Thursday afternoon and Israel consent to it was only a formality, he said.

Dr. Shaath said Mr. Arafat would appoint the remaining nine members within a week. Asked why the PLO decided to send an incomplete list, he said: "It's because there was a need by the Israelis to be assured on our seriousness in starting to conduct the authority's business."

The PLO has spent much longer than expected making the nominations, which the Israelis had originally hoped to receive about the same time as the signing ceremony on May 4.

Other members including Dr. Shaath himself, Zakaria Al Agha and Freih Abu Medjan from Gaza, Riyadh Zaounoun, Bethlehem Mayor Elias Freij and deportee Abdul Aziz Al Haj Ahmad.

Dr. Shaath said he expected the Palestinian authority would be in place in Gaza and Jericho by next Tuesday but it is too early to say which members would have which responsibilities.

He said he himself had been reluctant to take part but did not feel he could refuse at this stage in the process.

Dr. Shaath also said that the signing of agreement in Cairo has triggered a "faster pace of fund giving" by Western nations.

He disclosed new donations including 14 million francs (\$2.45 million) from France for a police communications system, \$2 million from South Korea for computers and other equipment and 58 military vehicles from Greece.

He said that 176 jeeps and trucks donated by the United States for the police from their European stock would arrive in Egypt next Sunday. The police have been hampered by a shortage of vehicles.

Militants gun down 3 policemen in Assiut

ASSIUT (R) — Gunmen thought to be Muslim militants killed three policemen in the south Egyptian province of Assiut on Friday, security sources said.

It was the deadliest militant operation since police in Cairo last month shot dead the man described as the head of the military wing of the Gama'a Al Islamiya (Islamic Group), the main organisation fighting the government.

In a first attack, the gunmen opened fire at plainclothes policeman Abdul Muhssen Atifi Nasr, 40, as he stepped out of a minibus in his village, the sources said.

The gunmen stole his revolver and fled. The policeman died later in the operating theatre in the hospital in near by Abu Tig, on the Nile 345 kilometres south of Cairo, they said.

Two hours later gunmen, probably the same group, attacked a police post in the village of Al Iqal, across the Nile from Abu Tig, killing two policemen and wounding a third, the sources said.

They stole two Kalashnikov assault rifles from the dead policemen and fled, they added.

Police said they suspected members of the Gama'a. Southern Egypt, the main theatre for Gama'a's operations, had been relatively quiet since police killed militant leader Talaat Yassin Hammam in a Cairo flat on April 25.

The policemen were the first killed in Egypt since April 27. Earlier this year Gama'a members

were shooting dead an average of about 10 policemen a month.

Gunmen wounded two policemen in the southern province of Sohag on May 4 and attacked a police station in Assiut province on May 9 wounding two passers-by.

Security sources say that in raids based on information collected from Hammam's flat, the Egyptian authorities have arrested at least 20 people linked with the militant leader.

Interior Minister Hassan Al Akl is expected to announce details of the latest arrests on Saturday.

He had originally promised to make the announcement on Thursday but the security sources said he postponed it to give the police time to follow up new information.

The Gama'a's aim is to overthrow the government and set up a strict Islamic state. Its main activities have been attacking policemen, bombing banks and trying to wreck Egypt's lucrative tourist industry by shooting at buses, trains and Nile cruisers.

Government ministers have repeatedly said they have the movement under control but the Gama'a has just as often risen from the ashes to fight back.

At the time of Hammam's death, the Interior Ministry said it had seized the fax machine used to send out Gama'a's statements. But statements in the same format arrived from another machine two days later.

Bashir blasts rebel leader ahead of peace negotiations

NAIROBI (AFP) — Sudanese President Omar Hassan Al Bashir on Friday blamed rebel leader John Garang and "foreign intervention" for the country's lingering civil war, and said Colonel Garang never kept promises made during peace talks.

Addressing reporters here ahead of a new round of talks to open Monday in the Kenyan capital, General Bashir said: "The problem here is Garang personally."

He said it was easier to negotiate with Riek Mashar, Col. Garang's former deputy in the rebel Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) who broke away in 1991 to form an SPLA splinter group called the SPLA United.

With the Riek's faction, Gen. Bashir said agreements remained valid, whereas Col. Garang's group went back on its commitments.

"With Garang's group ...

they do not recognise the agreements which we reached in each session of negotiations," said Gen. Bashir, the leader of Sudan's military government which is fighting mainly Christian and animist southern rebels.

"In negotiations with other groups, we find that we negotiate on all issues on the agenda and everything that we agree on continues to be valid," Gen. Bashir said.

Mr. Riek's split from Garang triggered an internal war between the two southern factions, divided along tribal lines.

Mr. Riek has repeatedly denied Col. Garang's accusation that he grants government soldiers safe passage through his territory to attack Col. Garang's troops.

Gen. Bashir, in Nairobi for the African Development Bank's 30th anniversary celebrations, will not take part

in the forthcoming peace talks, at which the government will be represented by Parliament Speaker Mohammad Al Amin Khalifa.

Mr. Riek and Col. Garang will send a joint delegation, and both were expected to attend the opening session Monday, according to rebel sources.

Khartoum launched a massive offensive against the south at the beginning of the year, sending warplanes and tens of thousands of soldiers against the rag-tag rebel guerrillas.

Khartoum apparently conceived the offensive as a final push to crush the southern rebellion draining its already overstretched coffers, diplomats said.

But the government forces seem to have bogged down and have failed to drive the rebels out of the south or cut their supply lines from Uganda.

Gen. Bashir also blamed the rebels for a failure to agree on opening safe corridors for relief supplies to millions of southerners hit by famine, stemming mainly from the displacement of huge populations by the decades-old conflict between north and south.

Gen. Bashir said one of main obstacles to peace was "foreign intervention," by unnamed countries bankrolling the rebels. "The leaders of the rebel movements do not control their decisions," he said.

He added that a dispute with Eritrea, which last year accused Sudan of sponsoring Islamic fundamentalist groups that launched cross-border raids into Eritrea, had been resolved.

He blamed an Eritrean faction opposed to the country's government for the attacks and said Sudan had curtailed its activities following talks with Eritrean representatives who recently visited Khartoum.